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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab: 3 Leaders Hold Initial Damascus Summit Meeting

JN0706161496 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1515 GMT 7 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Highness Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al- 'Aziz Al Sa'ud, crown prince, first deputy prime minister, and commander of the National Guard of Saudi Arabia, arrived in Damascus at 1515 [1215 GMT] today. President Hafiz al-Asad led those who received him at the VIP hall at Damascus International Airport. Also present to receive him at the airport were Vice President 'Abd- al-Halim Khaddam, Vice President Muhammad Zuhayr Mashariqah, Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi, Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', Syrian Ambassador in Riyadh 'Umar al-Sayyid, and Saudi Ambassador in Damascus 'Abd-al-Muhsim al-Balla'.

Prince 'Abdallah was accompanied by a delegation composed of Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal; Deputy National Guard Commander Shaykh 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Tuwayjiri; the crown prince's office director, Shaykh Nasir al-Rajihi; Royal Court protocol chief Shaykh Muhammad Bin-'Abd-al-Rahman Al al-Shaykh; the crown prince's adviser, Prince Turki Bin-'Abdallah Bin-Muhammad; and the crown prince's adviser, Shyakh 'Abd-al-Muhsin 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Tuwayjiri.

After introducing his delegation to Khaddam, the prince and Khaddam stood on the dais, where the two national anthems were played. They then reviewed an honor guard.

The prince then shook hands with the deputy prime ministers, the ministers, the governors of Damascus and the Damascus rural area, and the members of the Saudi embassy staff in Damascus.

In a statement to reporters, Prince 'Abdallah said: We arrived in our sisterly country, Syria, for the sake of a just and legitimate peace and to tell the world's peace-loving peoples that we call for peace and not for surrender or defeatism. This desire and understanding of peace emanates from our traditions and supreme values, our historical rights, and the will of our Arab and Islamic peoples. We are a nation synonymous with peace, whose virtues are clear on the paths of justice, love, goodwill, and dignity.

We hope that fear will vanish from the region and be replaced by peace and security in the land of prophesies and heavenly messages that sought peace, security, and prosperity for all humanity. This cannot be realized by brutal force, wars, or the usurpation of legitimate rights. We want peace and security for others in the same way we want it for our own people. Security cannot be realized without peace and justice. Sensationalism and the language of brute force only lead to complications.

We have come here accompanied by our Arab people's aspirations and dreams of peace. They are prepared to protect this peace and defend it by all legitimate means.

President Hafiz al-Asad, Egyptian President Husni Mubarak, and Saudi Crown Prince 'Abdallah met at the Tishrin Palace. The meeting was attended by the Egyptian and Saudi official delegations. On the Syrian side, the meeting was attended by Vice Presidents 'Abd-al- Halim Khaddam and Muhammad Zuhayr Mashariqah, Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi, Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', and Information Minister Muhammad Salman.

The three leaders will meet this evening to discuss points on summit agenda.

Inter-Arab: Al-Asad, Mubarak, Crown Prince 'Abdallah Meet in People's Palace

JN0706194596 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1925 GMT 7 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 7 Jun (SANA)—President Hafiz al-Asad, Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak, and His Highness Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, Saudi crown prince, first deputy prime minister, and commander of the National Guard, met at the People's Palace at 2015 [1715 GMT] today.

Inter-Arab: Al-Asad, Mubarak, Saudi Crown Prince Meet After Banquet

JN0806053096 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0415 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad, His Excellency Muhammad Husni Mubarak, and His Highness Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz held a meeting at the People's Palace after a dinner banquet President al-Asad hosted in honor of his two guests last night. The meeting was later joined by Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam, Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', Saudi Foreign Minister Sa'ud al-Faysal, and Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa.

The talks addressed the situation in the Arab arena and the region in light of recent developments, ways to remedy the Arab state of affairs, and ways to pool efforts toward the creation of a powerful Arab position in order to confront various possible eventualities and defend the Arab nation's territory, rights, and dignity.

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His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad hosted a dinner banquet at the People's Palace last night in honor of His Excellency President Muhammad Husni Mubarak of the Arab Republic of Egypt and His Highness 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, Saudi crown prince, first deputy prime minister, and commander of the Saudi Arabian National Guard. The banquet was attended by members of the Egyptian and Saudi delegations, Vice Presidents 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam and Dr. Muhammad Zuhayr Mashariqah, Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi, the deputy prime ministers, ministers, assistant ministers, the secretary of the Presidential Office, the governors of Damascus and Damascus Rural Area, the heads of Foreign Ministry departments, the Syrian ambassador in Cairo, the Egyptian ambassador in Damascus, and the Saudi ambassador in Damascus, and the heads of media organizations.

His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad, His Excellency President Muhammad Husni Mubarak of the Arab Republic of Egypt, and His Highness 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, Saudi crown prince, first deputy prime minister, and commander of the Saudi Arabian National Guard, had met at 2015 [1715 GMT] yesterday [7 June]. His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad, His Excellency President Muhammad Husni Mubarak of the Arab Republic of Egypt, and His Highness 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Saudi crown prince, first deputy prime minister, and commander of the Saudi Arabian National Guard, had also met at the People's Palace in Damascus when President Mubarak and Prince 'Abdallah arrived yesterday afternoon. The meeting was attended by the two official delegations accompanying President Muhammad Husni Mubarak and His Highness Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud. On the Syrian side, the meeting was attended by Vice Presidents 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam and Dr. Muhammad Zuhayr Mashariqah, Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi, Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', and Information Minister Dr. Muhammad Salman.

Inter-Arab: Al-Shar', Musa, al-Faysal Discuss Final Statement

JN0806124096 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1015 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar'; Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa; and Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, Saudi foreign minister, held a meeting at the Tishrin Palace in Damascus this morning. Their discussions centered on the final statement that will be issued today by the Syrian-Egyptian-Saudi summit being held in Damascus now.

Inter-Arab: Damascus Tripartite Summit Continues

JN0806121696 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1110 GMT 8 Jun 96

[Report by Thana' al-Imam from Damascus]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Tripartite Syrian-Egyptian-Saudi summit resumes in Damascus this afternoon in an atmosphere of satisfaction and confidence in its success and the possibility of realizing its first objective: to hold an expanded Arab summit.

In statements before meeting his Syrian counterpart Faruq al- Shar' and his Saudi counterpart Sa'ud al-Faysal this morning, Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said agreement was reached during yesterday's consultations to convene an expanded Arab summit that will discuss all matters that help safeguard the peace process. He added that the final communique to be issued today will announce this.

Responsible Syrian sources told Radio Monte Carlo this morning that the expanded summit will convene, but neither its venue nor its date have been set.

In reply to statements from some U.S. quarters that the Damascus summit is not important, the Syrian sources said that the U.S. viewpoint on the Damascus summit is known. The sources said that this summit is against normalization of relations with the Jewish state while other summits encourage normalization, without demanding that Israel give anything in return.

Meanwhile, French diplomatic sources say that the tripartite summit hosted by Damascus is a step in the right direction, pointing out that holding an expanded summit will prove to everyone how important this summit is, particularly because Arab leaders have not held a summit since 1990.

The Syrian sources said that the Damascus tripartite summit will end this afternoon and not tomorrow as planned because the viewpoints of the three parties are identical.

Inter-Arab: Al-Asad, Mubarak, Prince 'Abdallah Hold Final Meeting

JN0806144196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1415 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hafiz al-Asad, President Muhammad Husni Mubarak of the Republic of Arab Egypt, and His Highness Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, Saudi crown prince, first deputy prime minister, and commander of the Saudi National Guard, met at the People's Palace at 1330 [1030

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GMT] today to complete their discussions on the situation in both the Arab and regional arenas in light of recent developments.

Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam, Foreign Minister Faruq al- Shar', Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, and his Highness Saudi Foreign Minister Sa'ud al-Faysal also joined the meeting. This was the final meeting of the Damascus summit, which opened yesterday.

Inter-Arab: MENA Reports on Final Statement of Damascus Summit

NC0806134296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1305 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 8 Jun (MENA)—MENA has learned that in the final statement of their summit in Damascus, Egyptian President Husni Mubarak, Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, and Saudi Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz emphasized that their countries adhere to the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace as a strategic option. This necessitates that Israel also adhere to peace seriously and unambiguously.

The statement stresses that the only way to achieve peace is to obtain complete Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, including the Golan, south Lebanon, and the occupied Palestinian territory — notably Arab Jerusalem — in implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425 and the principle of land for peace.

The three leaders call on the world community, especially the cosponsors of the peace conference, to continue to support and advance the peace process.

They renewed their demand for establishing a zone free from weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, in the Middle East. This necessarily requires that Israel join the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

The three leaders decided to make rapid efforts to close Arab ranks and rebuild Arab solidarity within firm commitment to the Arab League charter and other Arab conventions.

For this purpose, the three leaders, according to the draft final statement, agreed to call for an Arab summit to be held in Cairo between 21 and 23 June.

The leaders express their countries' solidarity with the fraternal state of Bahrain in its effort to achieve security and stability and confront any foreign interference.

They express hope that Turkey will pursue a policy that serves good neighborliness, common interests, and respect for Arab interests.

Inter-Arab: Damascus Tripartite Summit Issues Final Statement

JN0806144496 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1405 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 8 Jun (SANA)—The final joint statement of the Syrian-Egyptian-Saudi summit, held in Damascus on 7 and 8 June 1996, was issued here today. The following is the text of the statement:

At the kind invitation of His Excellency Hafiz al-Asad, president of the Syrian Arab Republic, to His Excellency Muhammad Husni Mubarak, president of the Arab Republic of Egypt, and to King Fahd Bin-'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques, who deputized His Highness 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, crown prince, deputy prime minister, and commander of the Saudi National Guard in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the three leaders met in Damascus on 21 and 22 Muharram 1417 Hegira, corresponding to 7 and 8 June 1996.

Out of their faith in the Arab nation's common destiny, out of their sense of common responsibility toward the Arab nation, and because of the major role played by all three states, in their capacity as part of the greater Arab homeland and their efforts to safeguard its vital interests, and based on the ties of brotherhood among their states, the three leaders reviewed the Arab situation, recalling the statement that was issued in Alexandria. They also discussed the future of the peace process in light of the political facts in the regional and international arenas, as well as the latest developments in the region, with a sense of responsibility and a sincere desire to make every effort and use all their energies to awaken the Arab nation, reunite it, safeguard its interests, and restore its usurped rights.

The three leaders emphasized the commitment of their countries to realizing just and comprehensive peace as a strategic option that necessitates that Israel also be seriously and clearly committed to this option. Reneging or ceding what has already been achieved is unacceptable. They stress that any Israeli relinquishment of the principles on which the peace process is based, abandonment of the commitment and pledges that have been reached, or procrastination in the implementation of these commitments and pledges will put Israel in confrontation with the international community. This will risk returning the region to the whirlpool of tension and violence, for which Israel will be entirely responsible.

The three leaders emphasized that the only path to realizing peace requires Israel's full withdrawal from

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all occupied Arab territories, including the Golan, to the 4 June 1967 lines, and from southern Lebanon and the occupied Palestinian territories, headed by Arab Jerusalem in implementation of the Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, 425, and the land-for-peace principle. It also requires enabling the Palestinian people to practice their legitimate rights, headed by their right to self-determination, and to establish an independent state on their national soil.

In this context, the three leaders called on the international community, especially the cosponsors of the peace conference, to continue their support for the peace process to advance it on basis of the aforementioned principles. They expressed their confidence in the Arab nation's ability, through its solidarity and united position, to defend its legitimate rights in face of any circumstances that result from the continuation of the Israeli occupation of the Arab territories and settlements and its defiance of the international community's will.

The three leaders also reaffirmed their demand to set up a zone free of the weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, in the Middle East. This requires Israel to join the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and open its nuclear facilities to international inspection measures, in accordance with the International Atomic Energy Agency's program of safeguards.

The three leaders discussed developments in the Arab arena. They decided to persist in their efforts to close ranks and rebuild Arab solidarity within the context of a firm commitment to the provisions of the Arab League Charter and other Arab accords in order to protect the collective pan-Arab security and the Arab nation's supreme interests, in accordance with international legitimacy. To this end, the leaders agreed to call for an Arab summit in Cairo between 5 and 7 Safar 1417 Hegira, corresponding to 21 and 23 June 1996, and to ask Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak to extend invitations to the various Arab parties.

The three leaders expressed their countries' solidarity with the sisterly State of Bahrain in its endeavor to achieve security and stability and to confront the acts of riot and sabotage and any foreign interference.

The leaders also expressed the hope that Turkey will adopt a policy that is compatible with the ties of neighborliness and common interests and to respect Arab interests. In this regard, the leaders voiced their concern over the recent Turkish-Israeli agreement and urged Turkey to reconsider it.

The leaders look forward to their next meeting to continue the march of political coordination and cooperation among the three countries. They also express their deep gratitude for President Hafiz al-Asad of the Syrian Arab Republic for the warm reception and hospitality.

Inter-Arab: 10-Nation Arab Summit Reportedly To Be Held in Cairo 15 Jun

NC0806085696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0810 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait, 8 Jun (MENA)—Press sources in Kuwait report that an expanded Arab summit including 10 Arab countries—Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, the United Arab Emirates, the Sultanate of Oman, Jordan, and Lebanon—will be held in Cairo next Saturday (15 June).

The Kuwaiti newspaper AL-SIYASAH says today that Cairo managed to arrange for such a summit after recent contacts. The paper adds that it is not yet known if Kuwait, Bahrain, and Qatar will participate in this expanded summit or whether the participation of the aforementioned three gulf states will be enough. In that case, the paper continues, the summit conference will be a triangular one comprising three Arab Maghreb countries, three Gulf states, and three Arab Mediterranean countries.

The Kuwaiti newspaper says Libya, Sudan, and Iraq will have no place in this meeting. The meeting, it adds, is regarded as a prelude to establishing a future Arab atmosphere that could generate what is dubbed as a minimal level of Arab solidarity, which the Iraqi regime destroyed by invading Kuwait in 1990.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Welcomes Outcome of Damascus Tripartite Summit

JN0806185496 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat welcomed the outcome of the Egyptian-Saudi-Syrian tripartite summit that concluded in Damascus today and the call for an expanded Arab summit in Cairo on 21 June.

The president also welcomed the Arab states' adherence to just and comprehensive peace as a strategic option and their assertion that the only way to achieve peace requires Israel's withdrawal from all the Arab territory, including occupied Jerusalem; boosting the peace process; and granting the Palestinian people the right to self-determination and the right to establish an independent Palestinian state with holy Jerusalem as its capital.

President Yasir 'Arafat praised the efforts of Egyptian President Husni Mubarak and the other Arab kings and

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presidents who seek Arab solidarity, especially at this stage, in order to make the Arab nation shoulder its historic responsibility to confront the crucial challenges.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Calls On Summit To Back Anti-Israel Resistance

NC0706115496 Paris AFP in English 1046 GMT 7 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jerusalem, June 7 (AFP) — The radical Palestinian movement Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] called on Syrian, Saudi and Egyptian leaders meeting Friday [7 June] in Damascus to back "popular resistance" against the new right-wing government in Israel.

In a statement faxed to news organizations, the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) called on the three-way summit to "give its backing to the campaign of popular resistance as a strategic choice in the battle against Zionist plans."

Hamas also called for Arab nations to step in to prevent a Palestinian civil war caused by "the policies of the PLO and the Palestinian Authority" headed by Yasir 'Arafat.

The fundamentalist movement is violently opposed to the peace agreements between Israel and the PLO, and it has been responsible for most of the suicide bombings in the Jewish state.

In its statement, Hamas also called for Arab states "to close ranks and create at least a minimum of solidarity to confront the dangers threatening the Arab nation."

Friday's summit in Damascus was due to bring together the Syrian and Egyptian presidents, Hafiz al-Asad and Husni Mubarak, and Saudi Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz to discuss a common response to the election of right-wing leader Binyamin Netanyahu as Israel's new prime minister.

Netanyahu's victory has sparked fears among Arab states for the future of the peace process given his positions ruling out a Palestinian state, any negotiations over the future of Jerusalem, or a return of the Golan Heights to Syria.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Official Comments on Damascus Summit

NC0806185496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 8 Jun 96

[Telephone interview with Abu-Hamdan, representative of Hamas, Islamic Resistance Movement, by 'Isam Hasan in Tehran on 8 June]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Hasan] Mr. Abu-Hamdan. A tripartite summit ended in Damascus today. How do you view this summit and its results?

[Abu-Hamdan] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. We must note, as everyone knows, that this summit is part of the moves made in the wake of the Likud leader's winning the election to the post of prime minister in the occupying state. Another thing to remember is that this summit is being held on the 30th anniversary [as heard] of the 1967 June defeat. All the bitter circumstances we are experiencing are a direct consequence of that defeat. The summit comes at a time when the Zionist community has declared that it is not seeking peace as much as it is seeking a security that will guarantee its continued control over the occupied territories and its continued expansionism by various methods and under various slogans. Therefore, I believe that the summit was not held out of fear that the peace process might collapse or at least falter. It was held, I think, on the grounds that the Zionist community has chosen a particular type of peace that threatens the very existence of the Arab countries in the long term, even if they sign peace agreements. Regarding the summit's results, I think that the summiteers did well to call for an Arab summit conference aimed at rallying Arab ranks. It is important that the conference should not promote a political settlement but encourage the resistance option. It should not be a forum where speakers vie in their declarations that the policies of surrender should continue, but a forum from which a serious call is made to support the policies of steadfastness and resistance. Steadfastness and resistance have, in my opinion, proved to be the most successful policies so far. Another issue which we had hoped that the summit would clearly stress is this: A real peace is one based on the restoration of all usurped rights, including the entire territory of Palestine and other usurped territories like the Golan Heights, south Lebanon, and some Jordanian territories. Unless these rights are restored to their owners, there will be no peace or security in the region.

[Hasan] Thank you.

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Palestinian Affairs: Palestinians To Present 'Working Paper' to Cairo Summit

JN1006062796 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0500 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat's adviser Nabil Abu-Rudaynah expressed hope that the upcoming Arab summit will restore Arab solidarity and support Palestinian rights in the final-stage negotiations. Abu-Rudaynah added that the Palestinian delegation to the summit will present a working paper that will be in harmony with the Arab initiatives to mend the Arab rift and close Arab ranks.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Adviser Comments on Upcoming Cairo Arab Summit

JN0906075596 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0420 GMT 9 Jun 96

[Telephone interview with Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, adviser to Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat, by 'Asif Humaydi in Jericho—live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Humaydi] Do you expect comprehensive or only partial Arab participation in the upcoming Arab summit on 21 June?

[Abu-Rudaynah] As you are aware, we have always followed up on Arab contacts leading to a summit, beginning at the bilateral level and then at the trilateral level. It was always argued that it was necessary to call all of the Arab states for a summit. These Palestinian-Egyptian-Arab contacts have apparently reached a satisfactory conclusion. We await this expanded meeting.

[Humaydi] What does the Palestinian side expect of this summit?

[Abu-Rudaynah] As I told you, perhaps you recall the statement issued by the tripartite al-'Aqabah summit among President Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat], President Mubarak, and His Majesty King Husayn, as well as yesterday's Damascus statement, which demanded full implementation of the peace agreement and recognition of Palestinian rights, particularly the right to self-determination. We regard these stands and these statements as support for the Palestinian negotiator in the upcoming phase, which will define the fate of peace in the region and the Middle East.

[Humaydi] The Palestinian side must have an agenda during the summit. What are the highlights of this agenda?

[Abu-Rudaynah] The agenda basically concentrates on giving Arab solidarity an opportunity to be revived after a long absence, which is in itself a great political victory. Therefore, the topics of peace and the Palestinian, Syrian, and Lebanese tracks will be on the agenda, as will be the issues of implementing the peace agreements and renewing Arab support for the Palestinian and Arab negotiator working to regain their rights. The Palestinian cause will be at the center of the talks. The talks will also deal with the future of peace, the peace process, and the future of the Middle East.

[Humaydi] Therefore, we understand that the Palestinian side welcomes the 21 June Arab summit. Thank you, Mr. Abu-Rudaynah.

[Abu-Rudaynah] Thank you, Brother 'Asif.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Abd-Rabbuh Terms Upcoming Summit 'Extremely Important'

JN0906143096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1300 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Minister Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh said the upcoming Arab summit is extremely important because it may lead to Arab strategies for negotiations and peace in light of the existing principles and resolutions. Minister 'Abd-Rabbuh also said the summit came at a time when the peace process was facing a possible setback as a result of the Israeli Government's ideas, which may reverse the peace process and give free rein to the settlement policy.

Minister 'Abd-Rabbuh added that convening this Arab summit and restoring Arab solidarity would save the peace process. Therefore, he said, the summit requires urgent international support, particularly from the two sponsors of the peace process.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Says State Coming 'Sooner or Later'

JN0906184796 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 9 Jun 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a statement to the U.S. Cable News Network, CNN, today, President Yasir 'Arafat said that the Palestinian state is coming sooner or later.

President 'Arafat spoke about the Arab summit which will be held in Cairo this month, saying: This summit is very important to restore and bolster Arab solidarity on the road to achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

His excellency also spoke about the Palestinian people's difficult conditions as a result of the Israeli siege, calling on the donor states to fulfill their obligations toward our people.

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Palestinian Affairs: Egypt Said Initiating UN Resolution on Palestinian State

TA0706135196 Tel Aviv HATZOFE in Hebrew 7 Jun 96 pp 1-2

[Report by Hagay Huberman]

[FBIS Translated Text] Egypt is initiating a UN resolution to approve 'Arafat's declaration of a Palestinian state. President Mubarak prompted 'Arafat to announce at the al-'Aqabah summit meeting his intention to declare the establishment of a Palestinian state as part of that scheme, Palestinian sources claim.

The sources said the initiative is being led by UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus Ghali and Egypt's UN Ambassador Nabil al-'Arabi. Al-'Arabi plans to exploit the fact that he is acting chairman of the Security Council. Still, the initiators assume that the United States will impose a veto. Their aim is to embarrass Clinton and Netanyahu in most of the countries that will support the resolution.

Egyptian President Mubarak, Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, and Saudi Crown Prince 'Abdallah will meet in Damascus, and it is possible that the plan will come up there.

A senior Palestinian Authority source confirmed to ITIM on Wednesday [5 June] that 'Arafat received advice from one of the Arab leaders with whom he met in al-'Aqabah to declare a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital in order to force Israel's new Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to publicly state his views on the continuation of the peace process.

The senior official said that 'Arafat's remarks were not made off the cuff. Their aim is to get Bibi to make his view known on at least the issue of the permanent settlement and Jerusalem. On the question of whether 'Arafat's plan is aimed at provoking matters so as to receive an extremist response, which would thwart the negotiations between the Netanyahu government and the Palestinians, he said: "It is not a provocation; this is 'Arafat as I know him. By saying that, he plans to extract information from Netanyahu." He himself knows that Netanyahu is interested in continuing the peace process, but he wants to know what his precise outlook is on the Hebron pullout and Jerusalem. That is the top priority for Netanyahu, and it found expression during the election campaign."

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat, Mubarak Discuss Damascus, al-'Aqabah Summits

JN0906063696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0500 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] During a telephone conversation last night, President Yasir 'Arafat and Egyptian President Husni Mubarak exchanged views on the Damascus and al-'Aqabah summits. President 'Arafat welcomed the outcome of the Damascus summit and its call for an expanded Arab summit. 'Arafat praised President Mubarak's efforts to attain Arab solidarity.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Urges New Israeli Government To End Closure

JN0706132496 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1130 GMT 7 Jun 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza; from "Today's Events" program]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] President Yasir 'Arafat called on the governments of the donor states to offer urgent aid to the Palestinian people. The president review the very difficult Palestinian economic situation in a speech to representatives of the donor states and the World Bank at a meeting of the local coordination committee at the UN activities coordination office in Gaza. 'Arafat said that the donor states pledged to pay this year the $500 million they promised last year, but the money has not arrived.

'Arafat said the current economic situation is facing a crisis and needs assistance. He expressed hope that the new Israeli Government will contribute to ending the policy of closure and siege, noting that more than 150,000 Palestinian workers are without jobs. 'Arafat also expressed hope that the donor states will honor their commitments to the National Authority. The president said: I hope these economic problems will end as soon as possible so that we can truly protect and safeguard the peace process. The representatives of the donor states emphasized the difficult Palestinian economic situation. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: Hebron Mayor Interviewed on Israeli Army's Withdrawal

NC0806085096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0520 GMT 8 June 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo 8 June (MENA)—Hebron Mayor Mustafa al-Natshah has urged Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to respect the peace agreements signed between Israel and the Palestinian Authority [PA] and to carry out the Israeli forces' withdrawal

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from Hebron. In a statement to AL-AHRAM today, al-Natshah expressed his regret that the government of Labor Party leader Shim'on Peres had postponed the withdrawal from Hebron to 12 June and afterwards left this task to Netanyahu.

Al-Natshah warned that the Israeli Government's failure to withdraw from Hebron will pose a threat to the peace process in the entire region. He said any new government in Israel must abide by the agreements with the PA or any other Arab state signed by the previous governments. It should be recalled that the Taba Agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians stipulates that the redeployment of the Israeli forces in Hebron should have been effected last March at the latest. The withdrawal provides for handing over 85 percent of Hebron to the PA. The rest of the city—including the city center, the area around the al-Ibrahimi Mosque, and the Qiryat Arba' settlement—will stay as it is now, with the presence of joint Israeli-Palestinian police units under the supervision of UN observers. On the other hand, Hebron Mayor Mustafa al-Natshah rebutted the Jewish settlers' claims to have owned a Turkish bath located near the al-Ibrahimi Mosque since 1929. He said that the bath has been the property of the Islamic Awqaf Department for more than 300 years, and that the Department has refurbished the place and turned it into a museum. It is worth noting that Jewish settlers had demonstrated the night before in Hebron in support of it being named the capital of the West Bank, which Israel calls Judea and Samaria. Under the protection of the Israeli army, the settlers had occupied the Turkish bath and damaged the building's structure. They demanded Netanyahu pay the price for their support for him in the recent elections. They also demanded Netanyahu support and bolster the settlement plans in Hebron.

Palestinian Affairs: Hebron Mayor Warns of Rising Tension if Israeli Troops Stay

BR1006122696 Rome L'ESPRESSO in Italian 13 Jun 96 pp 82-83

[Interview with Hebron Mayor Mustafa Natshe by Donatella Orsini in Hebron; date not given: "Out of Hebron or It Will Be Intifadah"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Orsini] How did the Palestinian population react to the outcome of the Israeli election and what do you think will happen in your city now?

[Natshe] The first reaction was one of shock for the victory of the religious parties and the fanatics. Now the whole world — not just the Palestinians — is wondering whether Netanyahu will behave in a responsible fashion. If he does, then he will abide by the accord reached between Peres and Rabin and our President 'Arafat, and he will withdraw the Israeli Armed Forces from here.

[Orsini] If he does not?

[Natshe] If he does not, tension will rise until it reaches an inevitable and bloody climax. We will give him all the time he needs, but if nothing happens, I fear that the population will set aside its peaceful struggle for a solution to the conflict.

[Orsini] How much time do you think the new government will need to implement the withdrawal?

[Natshe] In my view, two months should be enough. The Israeli soldiers should be out of the center of our city by the end of the summer.

[Orsini] Otherwise, do you think that a new intifadah could begin?

[Natshe] We know that the slogans bandied about during election campaigns are not always translated into reality by a new government. We shall see, and the whole international community with us.

[Orsini] Some observers think that the peace process might be given a boost precisely under the auspices of a Likud government. Do you think that is possible?

[Natshe] It could be possible in theory. Any decision going in the direction of peace will have the Israeli parliament on its side. It will even be easier for the Right to dismantle the settlements. It will all depend on the stance the prime minister elect decides to adopt. Hebron could become a first positive signal, and an overture to the Arab world.

Palestinian Affairs: Primakov Phones 'Arafat, Reiterates Moscow's Peace Stand

JN0806085696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0500 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat received a phone call from Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov. Primakov reiterated his country's support for the Middle East peace process.

Primakov said that Russian President Boris Yeltsin is enthusiastic about and interested in the progress of the peace process. He emphasized that Moscow supports the National Authority and the Palestinian stand.

Palestinian Affairs: Further on PLO Executive Committee, Cabinet Meeting

JN0806065496 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0500 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat chaired a joint meeting of the PLO Executive Committee and

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the Cabinet last night. The Palestinian National Council [PNC] speaker and the Legislative Council's deputy speaker attended the meeting.

The participants reviewed the latest regional political developments and changes.

They also listened to a detailed report on the president's visit to the United Kingdom; his contacts with the two cosponsors of the peace conference, the United States and Russia; and his contacts with the EU, Japan, the United Nations, the other UN Security Council members, France, China; and the Islamic, nonaligned, and friendly countries. The conferees were also briefed on the al-'Aqabah summit. They decided to continue the plan of action at the Arab and international levels through an Arab summit in order to reactivate Arab solidarity and to enhance Arab and international interest in and commitment to the peace process within an effective framework to push the peace process ahead and guarantee the implementation of all parts of the agreements as scheduled.

The conferees stressed their firm commitment to the peace process and called for the mobilization of our Palestinian people everywhere to defend our national rights and gains and to block any party that tries to turn the clock back.

The conferees called on Israel to respect the agreements they signed and to implement them as scheduled, particularly the withdrawal from Hebron, safe passage, the termination of the closure and the siege, the completion of the redeployment, the liberation of the detainees, and other issues. The conferees also stressed the importance of resuming the final-status negotiations because procrastination and evading implementation will not serve the peace process. On the contrary, this will create more tension that will have a negative impact on the peace process.

It was decided to pursue the political action plan at the Arab and international levels to garner the support of more Arab and international forces for Palestinian rights.

The joint meeting of the PLO Executive Committee, the Cabinet, the PNC, and the Legislative Council decided to call on the fraternal Arab countries to link the peace steps to the progress achieved on the Palestinian track and the Syrian and Lebanese tracks on the basis of the land-for-peace principle and UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which emphasize the comprehensive nature of the solution and its interconnection.

The conferees also decided to start forming consultative councils in all the governorates. These councils will represent ministries, popular key sectors, and national institutions in organizing forms of national action.

The conferees sent greetings to the tripartite summit in Damascus and called for similar Arab moves by ranking Arab officials to confront the challenges our Arab nation is facing.

Palestinian Affairs: PA Official Says Likud Guidelines 'Declaration of War'

TA0806113296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Palestinian Authority [PA] officials have rejected the Netanyahu government's draft guidelines published by the media yesterday. Salah 'Abd-al-Jawad, the PA official in charge of agriculture, said the implementation of these guidelines would be tantamount to a declaration of war. The published draft guidelines speak against the establishment of a Palestinian state, of full and exclusive Israeli sovereignty in all of Jerusalem, and of Israeli sovereignty in the Golan Heights.

Muhammad al-Nashashibi, the PA official in charge of finances, said the Palestinians reject this plan that says no to peace.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Meets With Iranian Opposition Leader in London

TA0906082996 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 6 Jun 96 p 9

[FBIS Translated Text] London, QUDS PRESS — The Iranian opposition said yesterday that President Yasir 'Arafat met with Mrs. Maryam Rajavi, leader of the Iranian opposition during the former's visit to London two days ago.

A press statement sent to QUDS PRESS by the representation of the Iranian Resistance National Council [IRNC] said that the two sides reviewed bilateral issues, regional and international developments, and the Middle East peace process. The statement affirmed the Iranian opposition's support for the ongoing peace process in the Middle East.

The statement by the IRNC, which is made up of several Iranian opposition groups, most important of which is the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization whose headquarters is in Paris, said that President 'Arafat noted to Maryam Rajavi, who has been chosen president of the Iranian Republic by the opposition, the old ties binding him with her husband, Mas'ud Rajavi, head of the IRNC.

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Palestinian Affairs: Abu-Marzuq Reportedly Disappears From U.S. Prison

NC0806175796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Following reports that Dr. Musa Abu-Marzuq, chairman of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, Political Bureau, has disappeared from his prison in New York, a responsible Hamas source said that the organization strongly denounces the U.S. judiciary's unfair and inhuman measures and practices and holds the U.S. Administration fully responsible for Dr. Abu-Marzuq's life.

Palestinian Affairs: Hebron Mayor Denounces Killing of 2 Qiryat Arba' Residents

TA1006085496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hebron Mayor Mustafa al-Natshah denounces the attack near Bet Shemesh yesterday, saying it was aimed at disrupting the redeployment in Hebron. Al-Natshah told our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem that in the wake of the attack the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and settlers this morning prevented Hebron shop owners from opening their businesses.

Palestinian Affairs: Islamic Jihad Spokesman Released From Detention

TA1006104296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian security forces released Shaykh Nafis 'Asim, spokesman of the Islamic Jihad in the Gaza Strip, from his detention. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that he was detained approximately two months ago following the wave of attacks in Israel.

Palestinian Affairs: PLO's Qaddumi Urges Unity After Israeli Poll

MM0706155496 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 7 Jun 96 p 7

[Interview with PLO Political Department head Faruq Qaddumi by Rashid Khashanah in Tunis; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Khashanah] On what did your discussions with the Syrian officials in Damascus and with leaders of the Palestinian groups there center?

[Qaddumi] Our discussions covered the coming stage, the peace process, and the sufferings of our Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory as a result of the blockade that is imposed on them. We focused on the possible future developments in the wake of the Israeli elections and the victory of Netanyahu, who is well-known for his extremism and his opposition to the peace process, and what this victory dictates in terms of the need for the clearing of Arab climates and the convocation of an Arab summit conference in the future in order to bolster Arab solidarity.

We also had talks with national Palestinian groups and reviewed the peace process from its beginning, the obstacles it encountered, and the actions that could be taken to bolster Palestinian national unanimity in the coming stage, which will be the stage for discussing basic issues such as those of the refugees, Jerusalem, the settlements, and the borders. This stage demands Palestinian unanimity and Arab accord. For it would not be easy for the Palestinian side to take a decision in respect of these matters without Arab accord.

In this context, my visit [to Damascus] amounted to an expression of solidarity with Syria and Lebanon vis-a-vis the Israeli aggression, particularly with fraternal Lebanon which has been the victim of a treacherous aggression in which it stood fast against the aggressors.

[Khashanah] It was reported that the Palestinian delegation you headed would also visit Beirut. Why did this visit not materialize?

[Qaddumi] The reason was that brother Faris Buwayz and His Excellency (Rafiq) al-Hariri were not in Beirut at the time, as they were on a tour to rally support for Lebanon.

[Khashanah] Does this mean that the visit will take place at some later date?

[Qaddumi] Yes. It could take place.

[Khashanah] Which were the groups you met with in Damascus?

[Qaddumi] All the national groups.

[Khashanah] Was the main topic the abrogation of the Palestinian Charter?

[Qaddumi] The Charter was not abrogated. Only some of its articles were amended.

[Khashanah] What was the background to the meeting, then?

[Qaddumi] Netanyahu's victory in the Israeli elections made it easy for all the Palestinian resistance group to meet, because Likud will begin dealing with the peace process from zero or perhaps a little above zero.

[Khashanah] But Netanyahu has affirmed that he will continue with the settlement with the Palestinians?

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[Qaddumi] Yes, but not on the conditions contained in President Bush's initiative, known as "land for peace." Furthermore, the religious groups which have won a greater number of seats in the Knesset, giving the retired Israeli generals greater political muscle to influence Israeli decisions, will dominate Netanyahu.

The fact is that the election results have weakened both (major) parties, the Labor Party and the Likud, who lost many of their seats in the Knesset. This will mean that Israeli decisions will in the future be subject to the control of the many extremists who will form the new Israeli Government.

[Khashanah] Do not you expect Peres' policy to continue in the event of the formation of a coalition government by the two major parties?

[Qaddumi] I cannot imagine the Likud opting for a formula of national coalition because coalitions have their conditions and specific times such as when Israel becomes threatened by dangers or when there is an American agreement and favorable international conditions for Israel to deal a military blow to the Arabs. But the balance of power is at present in favor of Israel and consequently there is no need for a national coalition government, unless Israel wants to take a step involving a major concession of land which the Israelis would consider to be a threat that requires Israeli unanimity, and this is something that is not on the cards at present, because Israeli society has voted in favor of extremism and the blocking of the road to the peace process with its conditions that were approved by both sides, namely "land for peace" and the implementation of UN Resolution 242. The extremists reject these bases, and for this reason, a coalition is not one of the options on the cards.

[Khashanah] Do you not think that Netanyahu's victory by a slight margin means that the scales in Israel did tilt completely against the option of a settlement?

[Qaddumi] After all the international support, and particularly the American support, which he won and after the large Arab voters' support he was given, Shim'on Peres ought to have won. Yet, in spite of all that, the anti-Peres Israeli vote was large. The Arabs constitute only 17 percent of the votes in Israel. Their votes could not save Peres from falling. Neither the Labor party nor the Likud succeeded. Both lost many seats. This meant that the choice was in favor of extremism, that is, for the parties that won more seats. The difference between Peres and Netanyahu means nothing other than that the defeat of the former meant the proclamation of the victory of the other, as his only rival in the prime ministerial election.

[Khashanah] Does the PLO's presentation of the card of the amendment of the Palestinian Charter to Peres prior to the election not seem to have been a miscalculation?

[Qaddumi] It was a losing bet, because the side which was supposed to give something in return, namely Peres and the Labor Party, have lost the elections. It seems that the haste in taking the amendment decision without due consideration and thought have led to the loss of the card of amendment of the Charter and consequently the loss of its political value.

It is necessary now for the Palestinian people to embark within a short period of time on a national dialogue among the Palestinian leaderships, or through the Central Council or leadership conferences, or meetings between the secretary generals of the Palestinian groups, as we used to do in the past, to conduct a historical review of the Palestinian track during the past five years.

[Khashanah] Are meetings of this sort still possible?

[Qaddumi] Consultations are in progress at present in this regard. All the Palestinian climates seem to support such a dialogue.

[Khashanah] What took place at the talks you had recently in Cairo?

[Qaddumi] Following the announcement of the Israeli election results, it was necessary to evaluate these results and their implications with our Egyptian brothers, who are working to clear the Arab atmosphere and to facilitate the convocation of an Arab conference to bolster inter-Arab solidarity which will pave the way for a comprehensive Arab summit conference.

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Egypt

Egypt: Mubarak on Planned Arab Summit, Effects of Recent Changes

NC0806162096 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1537 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 8 Jun (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak announced that he will call for an Arab summit between 21 and 23 June. He said this summit's agenda will be the same as that of the tripartite summit held in Damascus and will include the issue of closing Arab ranks and backing the peace process, as well as other issues. This came in statements the president made following his return to Cairo from Damascus, at the conclusion of the tripartite summit.

President Mubarak said: There are many views on how to reach a solution to such issues. It is not easy for us to call for a summit to close Arab ranks and then have differences or call some groups but ignore others. It was therefore decided to invite everyone.

In reply to a question about the Damascus meetings, during which intensive talks were held, including a session that lasted until early today, and whether this meant that there were differing views and ideas, President Mubarak said: The basic idea agreed on by all of us is to close Arab ranks. The whole world has now become many blocs and cooperation unions in Latin America, Europe, the far East, and Africa, except for us in the Arab world, where we are divided.

He added: The thought that preoccupied us all was how to close Arab ranks. There was an idea about tackling the existing problems by holding summits for the heads of blocs in all the Arab areas, so as to avoid any existing problem and not to let matters get complicated. But we said that if we want to close Arab ranks, then we must invite all the presidents and kings.

Asked whether Iraqi President Saddam Husayn will be invited to attend the summit and whether this was discussed at the Damascus summit, President Mubarak said: Basically, the invitation is for everyone. But, in light of existing conditions, the consultations, and current sensitivities, we will postpone the issue of Iraq until another stage.

In response to a question on whether the Arab summit invitations will include the al-'Aqabah and Damascus summit countries, President Mubarak said: We will call for a full Arab summit to include the al-'Aqabah summit countries, the cordon states, all the countries.

On the date of this summit, he said the summit statement was issued saying that the leaders will arrive in Cairo on the proposed date of 21 June, and that the summit will continue on 22 and 23 June.

In reply to a question on whether he will contact Arab leaders before the summit, President Mubarak said: We will send invitations to the Arab leaders and be in constant contact with them, so that the summit will convene on time and so that we will be objective and pragmatic when it convenes.

Asked whether he has already contacted Arab leaders during his stay in Damascus, President Mubarak said: There were private contacts with them. We will start the official contacts with Arab leaders today.

In reply to a question on whether the recent changes in the region have brought back the climate that prevailed before peace, President Mubarak said: Before the invasion of Kuwait, we were on the verge of holding annual meetings on fixed dates, like the African summits. But then the invasion happened. Therefore, we must close ranks, get together, be in solidarity with each other, and resolve our disputes between ourselves instead of attacking each other here and there.

To another question on whether there will be a working paper on specific issues to be presented at the Cairo summit, President Mubarak replied: We will prepare a working paper on several points, including ones already discussed in the Damascus summit's agenda. We will also prepare all the necessary documents for this summit, which will start on 21 June.

In reply to a MENA question on whether the future of the peace process and the region will always remain dependent on the governments' formation in Israel, President Mubarak said: The future of the region is not dependent on any particular thing. We are talking about the peace process. There are things that influence this process, such as the elections in Israel, where those who are ruling cannot proceed with the peace process but leave it for those succeeding them. He added: The United States is a partner with influence and value in the peace process. Its preoccupation with the elections might reduce somewhat the efforts it could exert to give impetus to the process.

In reply to a question about the offers made by the new Israeli prime minister's advisers to conclude partial agreements with Syria and not a peace treaty and whether this could be acceptable, President Mubarak said: These words are coming from there. But the agreement must be a comprehensive one.

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Egypt: Mubarak Phones Arab Leaders, Issues Invitations to Summit

NC0806204696 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Husni Mubarak telephoned a large number of Arab leaders tonight to invite them to attend the planned Arab summit on 21-23 June.

President Mubarak called several Arab kings, amirs, and presidents, briefed them on the results of the tripartite summit in Damascus, and invited them to attend the Arab summit in Cairo on 21-23 June.

The President telephoned His Highness Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, president of the United Arab Emirates; His Highness Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah, amir of Kuwait; His Highness 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, amir of Bahrain; and His Highness Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, amir of Qatar.

His excellency also called Moroccan King His Majesty Hassan II; Algerian President Liamine Zeroual; brother Colonel Mu'ammar al- Qadhdhafi, leader of the Libyan revolution; and Mauritanian President Maaouiya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya.

He also telephoned Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi, Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, and Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat.

President Muhammad Husni Mubarak also telephoned Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid and reviewed with him the results of the tripartite Damascus summit, the issues it tackled, the statement it issued, and the agenda it proposed for discussion by the Arab kings and presidents during the upcoming Arab summit in Cairo on 21-23 June.

Egypt: 'Sources' Describe Mubarak Phone Call From Clinton

NC0906161296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1545 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Jun (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak received a telephone call from U.S. President Bill Clinton this afternoon.

Official Egyptian sources have stated that the conversation dealt with the situation in the Middle East, the nature of the coming phase, and the importance of cooperation and coordination to promote the peace process on all tracks. The sources added that President Clinton noted that his upcoming meeting with President Mubarak toward the end of July will be useful and beneficial for the peace process. President Clinton affirmed that the United States will continue to make efforts to promote peace in the Middle East.

Egypt: Mubarak Discusses Arab Summit, Israeli Stance

NC1006075696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0517 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 10 Jun (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak has announced that Egypt will invite Sudan to attend the plenary Arab summit scheduled to be held in Cairo on 21-23 June in accordance with the agreement reached during the Damascus summit among Mubarak, Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, and Saudi Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz.

In exclusive remarks to Samir Rajab, chief editor of MAYU, today the president said Egypt does not object to cooperating with all the Arabs, is willing to rise above current disputes, and thinks only of supreme Arab interests, because the nation is facing major changes in the region that have a bearing on the peace process. He explained that developments require a summit at this stage. He said: We agreed it should be held in Cairo and that Egypt will issue the invitations.

President Mubarak added: I am optimistic about the results of this expanded summit.

Mubarak pointed out that he feels no despair; he has been working for the past four years to rally the Arab ranks and achieve Arab reconciliation.

He declared: Thank God we have achieved what we wanted to achieve. I have telephoned all the Arab kings, presidents, and amirs and they have all shown willingness to attend.

Regarding the possibility of inviting Iraq to the summit, President Mubarak announced: We agreed during the Damascus meeting not to invite Iraq to this summit to avoid any possible problems that might hinder it. We are also considering the raw feelings that still exist after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

President Mubarak said all the Arab leaders have shown a total willingness to attend in person to represent their countries—Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Algeria, Mauritania, Djibouti, Palestine, the Comoros Islands, and Sudan. He said Egypt is the host country.

Asked about U.S. reaction to the summit, President Mubarak said: We have called for a summit for two basic reasons, first, to rally the Arab rank and, second, to pool all our efforts to boost the peace process and attain a comprehensive regional peace on the basis of justice. The United States, one of the two countries sponsoring the peace operation in the Middle East, has an interest in

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seeing peace being entrenched in the region and making purposeful strides toward a comprehensive settlement based on the land-for-peace principle in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions. This is why the United States has welcomed the summit. President Clinton telephoned to congratulate me on the agreement we have reached on it. Our conversation touched on the Middle East, the requirements ahead, and the need to cooperate, coordinate, and consult with each other to promote the peace process on the various tracks.

President Mubarak said he will visit the United States in late July in response to an invitation from President Clinton, asserting that this visit will be fruitful and beneficial to the peace process and Egyptian-U.S. relations.

President Mubarak commented on Israel's stance on peace after Binyamin Netanyahu's election as prime minister. He said: Netanyahu contacted me immediately after his election and showed a readiness to pursue the peace process. He also showed his eagerness to visit Cairo and meet me to discuss ways to complete the peace process. Netanyahu will visit us after he returns from a visit to Washington this month and I will discuss with him in Cairo developments at every stage of the issue.

President Mubarak commented on radical statements the Israeli prime minister is still making and whether this meant peace would retreat and Israel would have the upper hand. President Mubarak said: I assert that Israel will not control Middle Eastern politics. I also assert that peace will continue despite any obstacles. The Cairo summit is being convened to pursue peace, as I said, the peace that I emphasize is comprehensive and just.

On Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id of Oman's visit to Cairo, scheduled to begin today, President Mubarak said the whole of Egypt welcomes Sultan Qabus as an intimate brother and friend, one we are proud of and value.

Sultan Qabus has stood by our side in every crisis. He never abandoned us, supporting us with all his energy. We are obliged to note to him and to the fraternal Omani people their brotherhood and friendship. He will come as a dear and honored guest and we will discuss with him every Arab issue and issues beyond and promote bilateral ties. Sultan Qabus leads the Arab leaders who believe in the need to unify the Arab fold and settle and transcend differences to realize the higher Arab interest.

President Mubarak commented on developments in the fraternal state of Bahrain-, recent disturbances there, the plot against the regime discovered a few days ago, and Egypt's stance on all these issues. He said: Bahrain is a fraternal country and must be supported. I contacted Bahraini Amir Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah and asked him about the situation there. I affirmed to him our backing for every measure consolidating security and stability in his country, because stability is fundamental to peoples' lives.

Toward the end of his statements to Samir Rajab, President Mubarak spoke about domestic economic conditions. He said: Thank God, prices in our country are stable, unlike numerous regional countries and those beyond. There is no increase in the price of any commodity and there are no new burdens of any kind on citizens.

President Mubarak praised the performance of Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri's government, saying it is conducting its task successfully. He added: My continuous instructions to all ministers are: "Stand alongside the simple citizens. This is my policy from which I do not deviate. It eases burdens on the citizens, especially those with a limited income; we are constantly working to perpetuate and support this policy."

Egypt: Musa Comments on Damascus Summit, Future of Peace Process

NC0706170296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1530 GMT 7 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 7 Jun (MENA)—Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has noted the importance of the Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi summit, saying it seeks to close the Arab ranks and protect the peace process on the basis of a land-for-peace exchange. He said participants in the summit will discuss the general Arab situation and prepare for a wider summit.

On an expanded Arab summit, Musa said in a statement today that the Damascus summit will determine this issue.

On the peace process after the election of Binyamin Netanyahu as the new prime minister of Israel, Musa said the peace process is bigger than any change here or there. He added: It is important that the parties abide by the process and implement the signed agreements. The Arab side will work to protect the peace process and the bases on which it was founded.

Asked about Netanyahu's statement that Israel will not return the Golan to Syria, Musa said: "We will comment and announce our position after we know the Israeli Government's final, official position."

Asked if the peace process is in danger, the foreign minister said there is a thick fog around the peace process but he expressed his belief that the process is not in danger.

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Asked if the Arab countries can protect the peace process, Musa replied: "Certainly; this is very necessary."

Asked to comment on separate agreements, Musa said: There is a Palestinian-Israeli agreement and a Jordanian-Israeli agreement. There are negotiations between Syria and Israel, and Lebanon and Israel are participating in an international committee.

He added: It is very likely that all the sides will protect the peace process on the basis of land for peace and the achievement of Palestinian rights.

Egypt: Al-Baz on Contacts, Preparations for Arab Summit

NC0906163296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1500 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Jun (MENA)—Dr. Usamah al-Baz, first Foreign Ministry under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, said that President Husni Mubarak has started a series of active contacts with a number of Arab leaders concerning the Arab summit, which Egypt will host from 21 to 23 June.

He said the contacts involved the Gulf Cooperation Council states, the five Arab Maghreb countries — Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Mauritania — Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, Lebanon, Yemen, Djibouti, and the Comoros.

He said President Mubarak telephoned the Arab leaders, and it is possible that in the next few days some letters will be addressed or Egyptian envoys will be dispatched to the Arab leaders to deliver invitations to the summit and discuss arrangements for it.

Dr. al-Baz said the Egyptian contacts seek not only to extend invitations, but also to explore ideas and hold consultations on the summit's topics.

Asked if Arab foreign ministers will meet before the summit to coordinate positions and prepare an agenda for the summit, Dr. al-Baz said contacts are now under way to discuss this matter. He said there will be coordination before the summit at the level of the foreign ministers and leaders themselves.

Asked if any bilateral Arab differences will affect the summit proceedings, al-Baz said this is up to the Arab leaders and presidents to decide.

Asked if there is satisfaction regarding future Arab moves, al-Baz said: We feel satisfied with the Arab reaction. It is very clear that all Arab countries are looking forward to the summit. They comprehensively and spontaneously welcomed President Mubarak's invitation. No Arab leader questioned the timing of the summit. On the contrary, the summit was fully welcomed and there was appreciation for Egypt and President Mubarak and for the initiative of the Damascus tripartite meeting.

Dr. al-Baz said Arab leaders and people generally acknowledge that the current circumstances require a meeting at this level.

Asked why the summit will not be held under the Arab League umbrella, he said that the Arab League will participate in the summit. He explained that summit meetings are not part of the Arab League bodies or institutions. He added: There is nothing in the Arab League charter or protocol to suggest that Arab summits must be held only within the framework of the Arab League. But this method was introduced by late President Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir when he called for convening the first Arab summit in Cairo.

He stressed that the Arab League is always present at such meetings, but the summit itself is outside the structural framework of the Arab League.

Egypt: Al-Baz Says Arabs Reject Netanyahu's 'New Proposals' for Peace

NC0906175396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1615 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Jun (MENA)—Dr. Usamah al-Baz, first Foreign Ministry under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, said that neither Israel nor any other country can individually determine the concept of peace.

Commenting on the so-called "Netanyahu's no's," in which the Israeli prime minister-elect rejects the establishment of a Palestinian state and withdrawal from the Golan, Dr. al-Baz said in a statement today that the binding concept of peace is the terms of reference of the negotiations as agreed upon at the Madrid conference in 1991.

He said negotiations are not moving in a vacuum but have political and legal terms of reference. He explained that the Madrid conference determined that a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace must be established based on UN Resolutions 242 and 338; Security Council Resolution 425 on Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon; the principle of land for peace; and the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

He said all negotiations, now and in the future, are supposed to have these terms of reference, accepted by all those who participated in the Madrid conference, including the cosponsors of the conference — the

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United States and Russia — the European Union, Japan, and the parties to the peace process.

Neither the Israeli prime minister nor anyone else in Israel or elsewhere can change the terms of reference, al-Baz said.

He added: Before talking about alternatives to the Madrid formula, the Israelis must basically underline their commitment to the Madrid terms of reference as the basis of the negotiations and agreements reached between Israel and some Arab parties; it is inconceivable to go back on this basis.

Dr. al-Baz said the Arabs reject any new Israeli proposals regarding another Madrid conference. He added: The Arabs are not committed to accepting any such proposals. If Netanyahu wants to offer new proposals or new concepts for peace, he can do that out of the context of the Madrid 1991 formula. An alternative to Madrid is rejected in advance, because the Arabs accepted a certain formula, one that achieves balance between the interests of all parties.

Al-Baz added: We believe peace is the best way to bring about security, and that security is achieved when the causes of tension and conflict are removed. Security is an element of the peace process, not a separate issue.

He said Netanyahu must explain to us what he means by "Madrid 2." If he means new terms of reference, then the answer is no, because the Arabs will not accept a change to the bases on which the Madrid conference was launched in 1991, and on which the previous steps in the peace process were made. We cannot stop in the middle of the road and change the terms of reference to which all parties committed themselves, he said.

Dr. al-Baz explained that what has been achieved within the peace process on the bases of the Madrid formula cannot be reversed. He said the Madrid conference launched the peace process, in all its parts and phases, and determined negotiations on the various bilateral and multilateral tracks, in which the world community is participating.

He said Israel cannot individually cancel what has been agreed upon, and it is also politically unacceptable for Israel to propose new terms of reference and new bases for the peace process.

He said all the Arab and international community want now is to activate the peace process after the formation of the new Israeli Government. He stressed the importance of Israel committing itself to continue the peace process in accordance with the bases on which the peace process was launched: A land-for-peace exchange and the implementation of the UN resolutions.

Egypt: Cairo Newspapers Highlight Significance of Arab Summit

NC0906071996 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0511 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Jun (MENA)— Egyptian newspapers today welcome the agreement to hold a comprehensive Arab summit in Cairo on 21 June to discuss unifying the Arab fold and supporting the peace process.

On their front pages and in main headlines, the three Cairo newspapers AL-AHRAM, AL-AKHBAR, and AL-JUMHURIYAH highlight a statement by the three leaders—President Husni Mubarak, Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, and Saudi Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz. Th· three leaders made a commitment to achieving a just and comprehensive peace as a strategic option that necessitates Israel's complete pullout from all occupied Arab territories.

AL-WAFD concentrates on the Egyptian and Syrian leaders' assertion of the need for Israel to withdraw from Jerusalem, the Golan, and southern Lebanon and their call on the international community to back the peace process.

In its editorial, headlined "Reviving Summit Diplomacy," AL-AHRAM says President Husni Mubarak's persistent and intense activities are regarded as a successful attempt to revive the summit diplomacy that Egypt launched in 1964 when Israel tried to change the course of River Jordan.

The paper adds that, as it works hard to revive summit diplomacy, the Arab nation senses the danger of diverting the course of the peace process in recent radical Israeli statements.

The paper notes that Arab solidarity through an expanded summit will demonstrate to decision makers in Israel how the Arabs view a just and durable peace far different from the Likud's declared policy and warlike gestures and threats to revoke the peace accords.

Under the title "The Restoration of Arab Solidarity," AL- JUMHURIYAH says in its editorial that the Damascus tripartite summit is an important step toward restoring Arab solidarity and adopting the method of expanded Arab summits to keep pace with the dictates of the future.

The paper adds that even though there is a long way to go for the resumption of collective Arab summits in light of the prevailing differences in inter-Arab ties at times, the invitation to hold a collective Arab summit is a tangible accomplishment. This, it notes, is a result of

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persistent and sincere work by Mubarak's Egypt, which is linked to its Arab sisters through close ties.

The paper says there are current events that make it a priority to restore Arab solidarity and show the Arabs' strength in service of higher Arab interests.

In his daily column in AL-JUMHURIYAH, Samir Rajab, chairman of the newspaper's board of directors, says the selection of Cairo as the venue of an enlarged summit holds many meanings, mainly that the heart continues to do its vital duty from birth to the end.

He hopes that the Cairo summit's resolutions will sincerely and succinctly express the desires, hopes, and aspirations of all Arab peoples. Rajab says convening this summit demonstrates that the Arabs have begun to realize the right path so that the entire world will understand that the Arabs have become a single entity that must be heeded a thousand times over.

AL-AKHBAR's chief editor Jalal Duwaydar writes about the importance of holding an Arab summit in Cairo. He says the dangers facing the peace process and the series of regional and world conspiracies against the Arab nation now provide an incentive for greater Arab rapprochement in the next phase on sound bases and with solid aims, thus ending a phase of skepticism.

In his article in today's issue of that newspaper, AL-AKHBAR's chief editor reviews Egypt's and President Mubarak's efforts to forge an agreement to hold a collective Arab summit to reestablish joint Arab action and ensure the effectiveness of any Arab action to preserve the Arabs' just rights.

AL-AKHBAR's editorial deals with the same subject. It notes agreement among various political and media circles in most world capitals that Mubarak's Egypt has launched a multipronged offensive to curb expected Israeli extremism when Likud party Leader Binyamin Netanyahu takes power.

The newspaper says praise of Mubarak's Egypt and its serious stands on reviving Arab solidarity is not exclusive to Arab capitals but has spread to other world capitals and important political and media circles.

Egypt: Cairo Papers View Motives, Goals of Arab Summit Meetings

NC0806082296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0501 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 8 Jun (MENA)—Cairo newspapers today emphasize that the successive Arab minisummits have instilled a spirit of hope and confidence in the possibility of restoring Arab solidarity or at least achieving a minimal level of joint Arab action and unity. This, the papers say, is prompted by the Arabs' adherence to the peace process, which is threatened with stagnation or suspension after the Likud Party takes power.

The papers are unanimous that the latest Arab move, led by Egypt, did not occur in a vacuum but was dictated by circumstances and challenges that are affecting everyone.

AL-AHRAM says in its editorial that the idea of holding bilateral, tripartite, or quadripartite meetings have spawned ideas for holding an expanded, if not a plenary, summit. It notes that there are many motives for these summits, primarily inter-Arab ties, which have been worsening for several years, plus the coming to power of the radical Likud in Israel.

The paper says there is a genuine danger to the peace process in view of the antipeace agenda of the Likud. The paper adds that it is natural now, more than at any time before for these Israeli developments, to offset them with an Arab countermove embodied in meetings of the Arab forces that influence developments in the region.

In another editorial, AL-AHRAM says Arab summit diplomacy has been revived in these last few days so that there can be a positive and creative interaction with regional and global changes to serve the Arab peoples' interest and help overcome inter-Arab differences in order to restore effective regional order.

The paper adds that if regional political challenges comprise a strong incentive for the Arab countries to coordinate at the highest level, likewise the regional and worldwide challenges in the economic sphere now require swift Arab moves toward positive interaction regarding these challenges.

The paper notes that the Arab political coordination will remain positively linked to these challenges through personal initiatives but that this coordination will not last long if it is not based on strategic economic ties.

AL-JUMHURIYAH notes in its editorial that the aim of President Husni Mubarak's meetings with his brothers, the Arab leaders, is to discuss a comprehensive peace process and advancing this process with positive efforts on all tracks.

The second aim of these meetings, the paper adds, is to provide Arab unification efforts with a joint coordination that will heal the wounds of the recent past and allow a strong resurgence of Arab solidarity in order to resume Arab summit meetings to accomplish binding groundwork.

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The paper says Cairo's principled stands show that the entire world is convinced of the positive and active trend led by President Mubarak to defend the option of peace and capitalize on it for good ties with world leaders. It is a joint and continuous move by which the number of advocates of peace increase and through which strong Arab solidarity in the interest of peace and stability becomes certain.

Ibrahim Sa'dah, chief editor of the AKHBAR AL-YAWM weekly, writes an article entitled "There Is No Alternative to Peace". He says the Arabs and Israelis swapped seats and roles after Netanyahu's win. He notes that Israel is now the one who refuses to support the continuation of the peace process amid the fear and dismay of all the world's nations and governments. The Arabs, he adds, are the ones who are now working to unify the fold in their adherence to the peace process. He goes on to say that the peace process is threatened with stoppage or suspension because new Israeli leaders known for their bigotry and hatred of the Arabs and Palestinians have won.

Sa'dah concludes his weekly article by saying: A salute to Netanyahu. Had he not won the elections, this swift Arab move would not have taken place and we would not have dreamed of an imminent Arab reconciliation and unity of stands, ranks, and goals.

Egypt: MENA Reports on Arab Summit Draft Agenda

NC0906164896 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1610 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Jun (MENA)—MENA has learned that the basic blueprint of the draft agenda of the Arab summit, which will be held in Cairo between 21 and 23 June, focus on making quick efforts to close Arab ranks and rebuild Arab solidarity in order to safeguard the common pan-Arab national security and the higher interests of the Arab nation in line with international legitimacy. The agenda will also emphasize total Arab adherence to achieving a fair and comprehensive peace as a strategic option in accordance with the Madrid Conference terms of reference, UN resolutions 242, 338, and 425, and the land-for-peace principle; and to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their legitimate rights, foremost of which are their right to determine their future and establish their independent state on their national soil. The draft agenda includes discussions of all views relating to arrangements for Arab national security in light of current developments in the region and in line with the concept of safeguarding the inalienable Arab rights on which the charter establishing the Arab League was founded.

Diplomatic sources in Cairo have said that intensive consultations are under way between Egypt and several Arab countries to agree on the general issues that will be discussed at the forthcoming summit, in order to unify all Arabs stances on these issues and to work out a unified Arab position to agree on at the summit.

Egypt: Commentary Urges Arab Coordination To Face Challenges

NC0706141496 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1140 GMT 7 Jun 96

[Commentary by Zayn al-Ja'fari: "The Arabs Are Required To Achieve the Highest Level of Coordination and Solidarity"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Arabs, especially the parties directly concerned with the Middle East peace process, now need to achieve the highest possible level of coordination and unity. This is necessary amid rapid and successive developments in the region, the latest of which was the election of Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu as the new prime minister of Israel. Netanyahu's statements during and after the election campaign created an atmosphere of skepticism among the parties concerned with the peace process.

President Mubarak realizes the nature of the next stage of the peace process, which will probably be the most difficult stage, since the position of the new Israeli Government, which is now being formed, is not yet clear. Mubarak took the initiative to achieve the highest possible Arab coordination and solidarity with a view to creating a unified Arab position capable of handling developments in the region. The three-way summit among President Mubarak, King Husayn of Jordan, and Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat on Wednesday [5 June] was one of a series of summit meetings initiated by the Egyptian political leadership to deal with the changes in the region. Only two days before this summit, President Mubarak and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad met in Cairo, and before that, a Syrian-Lebanese summit was also held to coordinate and unify positions. It is within this framework that a tripartite meeting, bringing together President Mubarak, Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, and Saudi Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, will be held in Damascus today.

These summit meetings have so far involved the Arab states that are directly concerned with the peace procerss with Israel. It is clear that President Mubarak initiated these meetings because he realized it was not possible to hold a summit for all the Arab countries. This is because of the circumstances in the Arab world over the past few years and because attempts to clear the Arab air have not yet succeeded.

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We should not be overoptimistic or overpessimistic about the way things are in the region. As stressed by President Mubarak on Wednesday, we cannot build our positions on spontaneous and circumstantial impressions at this stage. We should wait to see the real intentions of the new Israeli Government. As President Mubarak emphasized, we should not prejudge, even if the signals coming from Israel have so far been negative and not reassuring.

We all know that the Likud's position on Palestine, based as it is on solid religious, historic, and ideological foundations, is largely inflexible. Hence, we should not assume that the Likud Party, only because it concluded a peace agreement with Egypt, will do the same thing with the other Arab sides. Signals given so far by possible senior members of the Israeli Government that is being formed, for example, their statements that Israel is not ready to withdraw from the Syrian Golan Heights, do not inspire optimism. And it is not likely that the United States, which will largely be preoccupied with the presidential election campaign, will be in a position to make great efforts to maintain the momentum of the peace process.

Given these circumstances, the Arabs, now more than ever, must achieve the highest possible level of coordination and solidarity to come up with an Arab position capable of confronting these developments.

Egypt: 80 'Militants' Reportedly Arrested in al-Minya

NC0806162396 Paris AFP in English 1328 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] al-Minya, Egypt, June 8 (AFP) - A total of 80 Egyptian Islamic militants have been arrested in the past week in their stronghold of the southern province of al-Minya, police sources said Saturday.

"They were second generation members of the armed extremist group al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah who were giving help to the organisation's armed activists still at large," said the source.

He said the activists had been picked up in a series of raids carried out since the beginning of June in various areas of the province, especially Mallawi, nearby mountainous areas and cemeteries where al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah activists often hide out.

Security forces uncovered 21 weapons in the raids, including an automatic rifle and ammunition, the source said.

The province of al-Minya, which has been the main stage for Islamic militant attacks since October 1994, has been quiet for nearly a month. On April 23 militants killed four policemen, including a general, in the province.

However, al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah has launched attacks within the past few weeks in other southern provinces including Suhaj, Asyut and Bani Suwayf.

Since the wave of Islamic militant violence broke out in March 1992, 1,023 people have died in related attacks.

Egypt: Military Industry Not To Be Privatized

NC0806112996 Cairo MENA in English 1105 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damietta, 8 Jun (MENA)—Minister of state for military production said today that none of the military production sector companies will be privatized, because the state-owned sector is a major strategic one.

The state will not permit any quarter to own the military industry because of its role in producing military materiel for the armed forces, Dr. al-Ghamrawi added.

Egypt, like other world countries, uses the capacities and capabilities of this sector, at peacetime, for furthering comprehensive development projects, the minister said. The military factories contribute, among other things, to environment-conservation through manufacturing equipment for water purification and desalination and for waste water treatment and garbage disposal, he added.

Libya

Libya: Al-Qadhdhafi—Unhelpful Traitors Shot 'Without Trial'

LD0906170496 Tripoli JANA in English 1607 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tripoli, al Sayf [Jun] 9, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY — The French News Agency, AFP, transmitted a distorted report including a part of the speech of the leader of the revolution to the extraordinary session of the General People's Congress last Wednesday night [5 June]. The AFP omitted an important section in which the leader referred to the laws and procedures usually followed in situations of general mobilisation whereby the punishment of the peon who helps the enemy sometimes reaches death penalty without trial and sometimes with field trial. [as received]

In reassertion of press honesty, violated by the AFP, we re-transmit the full text of the speech of the leader of the revolution in this respect. Following is the text:

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'The coordinator of the popular leadership in the area is the one who leads the battle in his area. Should the colonialist force come, the coordinator of the popular leadership in the area will be the supreme commander of the area and means shall be under his disposal. The coordinator shall use the law of general mobilisation which enable him to control all means and no one can say no to him. For in this situation anyone who may say no would mean that he is helping the enemy. Or he is one of the soldiers of the enemy and should be shot, sometimes, without trial and sometimes after a field trial.'

Libya: Oppositionist—Al-Qadhdhafi Dismissed Adviser, Cousins

MM0706152296 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 7 Jun 96 p 6

[Unattributed report: "Opposition 'Change and Reform Movement' Says: Al-Qadhdhafi Stripped Qadhdhaf-al-Damm of Powers"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-HAYAH — Burayk al-Suwaysi, official spokesman for the opposition Libyan Movement for Change and Reform [al-harakah al-libiyah li al-taghyir wa al-islah], has said that Libyan leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, "who used the tribe as a political card and a tool to achieve his aims, is dismissing his cousins who have been holding high posts. Among those dismissed included his former adviser Ahmad Qadhdhaf-al-Damm, who was stripped of all his powers and duties recently."

He added, in a statement issued by the movement yesterday, [6 June] that "the brutal campaign launched by the regime against Libya's sons is continuing, and there are indications that he has started to face some pressures and challenges that now represent a source of alarm and threat to his survival and stability. These challenges have even reached al-Qadhdhafi's home, as he is now aware of the huge gap between him and members of his tribe due to their growing condemnation of his policies."

Al-Suwaysi went on to say: "Members of the al-Qadhdhafi tribe are aware that the regime will collapse sooner or later and that its policies are putting heavy burdens on their shoulders, adversely affecting their interaction with the other sectors of Libyan society and their position in the future. This is why they have started to reconsider their stand on what is happening in Libya and have taken steps to express their dissociation from and rejection of al-Qadhdhafi's policies. All this prompted extensive search and investigation campaigns in the Surt area, during which large quantities of weapons and ammunitions were uncovered. The finger of accusation was pointed at a large number of members of the al-Qadhdhafi tribe, some of whom were arrested."

Concluding, he said: "The conditions Libya is experiencing requires that the Libyans be aware of the nature of the dangers threatening their country, remember their responsibilities toward their homeland, and intensify their efforts to speed up the day of salvation."

Sudan

Sudan: First Vice President Says Government Ready To Meet Garang

EA0806143196 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 7 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Major General al-Zubayr Muhammad Salih, the first vice president of the Republic, has affirmed the government's full readiness to negotiate with the rebel John Garang and his faction, the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army, inside or outside the country. At a meeting with Mr. Joseph Lagu, roving ambassador at the Foreign Ministry, His Excellency expressed the government's readiness to promote all ways and means of achieving security and stability in the country.

For his part, Mr. Joseph Lagu praised the revolution's efforts to end the conflict in the south, and to do away with disunity in order to face the challenges of ongoing changes in the Arab and African region.

Sudan: Rights Organization Says Labor Union Leaders Arrested

EA0806160296 (Clandestine) Voice of Sudan Voice of the National Democratic Alliance in Arabic 1715 GMT 7 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Sudanese Human Rights Organization has issued a statement saying that security authorities of the National Islamic Front Party have carried out an extensive campaign of arresting leaders of opposing labor unions. [passage omitted]

The labor union leaders were arrested without charges or trial. The leaders are: Mr. Mahjub al-Zubayr Muhammad Salih, former chairman of the General Federation of Sudanese Labor Unions; Mr. Yahya 'Ali 'Abdallah, former secretary general of the General Federation of Sudanese Labor Unions; Mr. [name indistinct], former treasurer of the General Federation of Sudanese Labor Unions; Awad al-Karim Muhammad, former secretary general of the Labor Union Alliance [words indistinct]; Mr. 'Abd-al-Wahhab Isa, former press official of the General Federation of Sudanese Labor Unions; Dr. (Yahya Salih Mukwar), member of the Executive

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Committee of the dissolved General Union of Physicians in Sudan.

The Sudanese Human Rights organization has expressed its deep concern at the fate of the said labor unions. It appealed to governments, parties, and human rights organizations to exert maximum pressure on the Sudanese Government to release the six labor unionists, as well as political detainees and prisoners (?of conscience) in Sudan.

Sudan: Measures Adopted To Control Government Expenditure

EA0906181596 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Ministry of Finance and National Economy issued a number of decisions and measures today to control government expenditure, and to confirm the ministry's control over public funds.

Dr. Sabir Muhammad al-Hasan, the minister of state for finance, announced that decisions have been made to the effect that all government revenue must be returned to the Ministry of Finance from where it will be transferred to the government's principal account. This does not include the Tax and Customs Departments.

The Ministry of Finance alone will be responsible for expenditure on priorities for the different government departments in conformity with its priorities. Government departments will not be allowed to authorize expenditure on their own with effect from the first quarter of the budget. They will not be allowed to spend funds on the running of services, and to make their own corrections and so on.

In accordance with the measures, it has also been decided that development expenditure will be carried out in conformity with the priorities stated in the president of the Republic's recent speech in connection with the extraction of oil, the construction of Rusayris Dam, and the rehabilitation of Sennar Dam.

The minister of state for finance said that a decision has been made to recentralize government purchases, and the Finance Ministry will be directly responsible for purchases by the different government departments.

The ministry has also issued clear directives, in line with controlling public funds, and stopping all exceptions to customs or tax exemptions for any institution apart from those which have international agreements with the government. This ban includes all institutions and local companies which used to enjoy these exemptions.

The Finance Ministry also announced the suspension of expenditure for erecting government buildings or their rehabilitation or maintenance by government departments. There is also a ban on the purchase of motor vehicles by these same departments. Expenditure will be controlled on the purchase of motor vehicles for the government or other government institutions. It is made clear that a committee has been set up to draw up a list of controls in addition to other controls on the use of government telephones.

Dr. Sabir Muhammad al-Hasan said that other measures have also been taken to prevent any government department from opening any account without prior authorization from the Finance Ministry. The ministry will also be responsible for closing government accounts with the Central Bank or other banks. Departments must not undertake this action on their own. Government departments, corporations, and companies are not allowed to grant any endorsements of incentives or rewards unless they are ratified by the finance minister.

Dr. Sabir Muhammad al-Hasan described these measures by the Finance Ministry, in addition to others adopted by the ministry such as removing the subsidy on petrol, as a necessary action to correct the budget deficit, and to restore the control of public funds to the Finance Ministry. These measures will alleviate the hardships borne by some consumers and producers.

He said that the ministry is of the view that control of revenue will assist in the control of expenditure through the disbursements of funds in accordance with expenditure priorities. He ascribed the present budget imbalance to inflation, and the fall in the exchange rate of the Sudanese pound.

The minister of state for finance also described his ministry's decision to remove the subsidy on petrol and other measures taken today as part of an integrated policy aimed at tackling the general budget imbalance, directing public funds, and giving attention to priorities. He stressed that if this policy is implemented, we shall see some improvement in the general budget. These measures also constitute a first serious step toward stopping economic deterioration. He said that if the situation is allowed to continue as it is, it will result in a higher rate of inflation which will further worsen the suffering of the citizens.

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Iraq: UN Team Arrives To Discuss Oil Deal Implementation

JN0706114296 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1103 GMT 7 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 7 Jun (INA) — A UN technical team arrived in Baghdad today on a one-week visit.

In a statement to journalists, Raymond Sommereyns, head of the West Asia Section of the UN Political Affairs Department and head of the team, said the team is visiting Iraq at the request of the UN secretary general. The will hold consultations with Iraqi officials on the practical aspects of implementing the memorandum of understanding that Iraq and the United Nations signed on 10 May.

He said the team of seven officials from the UN General Secretariat and experts in oil and customs affairs will complete its mission as soon as possible.

Iraq: Delegations Discuss Expediting UN Deal Implementation

JN0806195996 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1900 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 8 Jun (INA)—Iraqi and UN Delegations held two meetings here today to discuss ways to expedite the implementation of the memorandum of understanding concluded on 20 May. The UN General Secretariat delegation is led by Raymond Sommereyns. The Iraqi delegation is led by Dr. Shawqi Murqus, undersecretary in the Health Ministry.

Iraq: Oil Minister Promises Exports by End of Jun

MM0706151896 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 7 Jun 96 p 10

[Interview with Iraqi Oil Minister 'Amir Rashid by Randah Taqiyy-al-Din in Vienna; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Taqiyy-al-Din] Bearing in mind the current price of a barrel of oil and Resolution 986 which allows Iraq to sell $2 billion worth of oil for food every three months, how much oil will Iraq be exporting?

[Rashid] The memorandum of understanding allows Iraq to export $1 billion worth [of oil]. In addition, there are charges to be paid to Turkey and deductions which amount to 30 percent. If we take everything into consideration and use a price of $16 per barrel as a guideline for estimating revenues, we reach a figure of some 800,000 barrels per day. Using a price guideline of $17 per barrel, we reach some 700,000 barrels per day. For the sake of accuracy, any future fluctuation above or below the $16 price of a barrel of oil could increase or decrease oil production by about 50,000 barrels per day.

[Taqiyy-al-Din] You stated before that, within days, Iraq will start exporting the oil it is allowed to export, and that this will take place in June. In an interview with AL-HAYAH, UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus-Ghali said that oil exports will not start before two or three months' time. International oil companies expect Iraqi oil to reach the markets in mid-July. Are you being realistic and practical, especially in view of the fact that the Turkish authorities have said that one month is needed in order to clean the Turkish pipeline and open it from the north?

[Rashid] Frankly, there is a great deal of confusion surrounding the issue, and the statements of officials, starting with the issue of the Turkish pipeline, have not been accurately reported. Two days ago, we finished the cleaning and preparations. So, where is this one-month period that everyone is talking about? This is the first inaccurate piece of information. Also, Butrus-Ghali never said anything to us about a two-month period. However, the arrival of food is a different issue. As far as oil exports are concerned, when we sign an export deal a tanker will arrive a few days later to transport the oil. I believe that we will start oil exports within two weeks. Let me explain this to you. From a technical point of view, Iraq has been capable of exporting oil for some months now. We are now finalizing details in preparation for exporting the oil. These include working out the logistics, appointing officials for the export centers, and the arrival of international investigators to the harbors designated by both the secretary general and the boycott committee. A team of investigators will arrive in Iraq this week. Their task is to do with oil exports but they are also involved with the food issue. The team which is to arrive will assess the logistic needs of al-Bakr harbor and will examine the distribution plan that we will put forward to the secretary general for approval and so that he may advise the Security Council. Exports will start after that. Consequently, this process will take no more than a week. In any case, oil exports will start before the end of this month. Food distribution requires the oil revenues to be deposited in Iraq's escrow account. When the revenues collected reach a certain amount, it will then be possible to sign trade deals for food. This requires waiting for about 10 days and for a number of oil shipments to build up the funds, following which food will be distributed. Oil exports, however, will start at the end of this month.

[Taqiyy-al-Din] How much oil will you be exporting via the Turkish pipeline, and how much via al-Bakr harbor?

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[Rashid] At first, we intend to export some 440,000 barrels per day from the north via the Turkish pipeline and 330,000 barrels per day from the south via al-Bakr harbor.

[Taqiyy-al-Din] What will Turkey's revenues be?

[Rashid] We do not like giving details about bilateral relations. There is, however, an agreement between Iraq and Turkey. We have agreed that payment will not be in cash, and will, instead, be in oil.

[Taqiyy-al-Din] What incentives is Iraq offering the international oil companies for buying its oil and making deals with it, despite the major complications in the commercial procedures which all have to pass through the United Nations and the governments?

[Rashid] When you ask this question, you are driving at two questions which you have in your mind: What prices will we set for our oil, and on what terms? First, for a sizable period of six months, we will be exporting oil of a well-known grade, the best. There are various grades of oil. From the north, we will be exporting one of the best grades, the well-known Karkuk light. In the north, we will be exporting the al-Basrah "regular" [word published in English]. We will not be exporting oils of an "unknown" grade. Many companies now want to buy Iraqi oil. The mechanism for signing the deals may seem lengthy. However, one of the issues discussed in the bilateral talks on the memorandum of understanding, and which may not be clear in the memorandum of understanding, is that of streamlining procedures. Any deal between an oil company and the Iraqi Government must be approved by the United Nations in less than 24 hours. Before, when we used to make normal deals with any company, we used to need longer than 24 hours. Finally, we will not give any price incentives, because the oil price is determined by the boycott committee's investigators. Let us consider for example the possibility of making side deals to increase revenues. This is possible according to the memorandum of understanding, but we do not have any margin for doing this because we must achieve transparency with regard to the boycott committee and the client. This is fine, and everything will be clear. It is not possible to give price incentives because even a one-cent discount could render our estimates of what we will be able to buy with the amounts collected on the side inaccurate, and we are not prepared to do that.

[Taqiyy-al-Din] Some international oil companies' representatives in Vienna have told us that they will wait before buying Iraqi oil, in order to ascertain its grade and because it may not be right for their refineries, as a result of the failure to improve the Iraqi oil fields during the international embargo when Iraq was not able to export enough of its oil. Would you care to comment?

[Rashid] In order to preempt such considerations and avoid delaying the deals, I want to reassure you about this, because I am aware that these questions are being asked. We will be exporting a fine grade of Iraqi oil, with the same specifications as in the past. We will be exporting oil in order to obtain food for the Iraqi people, and we will not be drawn into clarifications and questions. If these are new people and companies which are not familiar with this issue, we are not interested. We are now producing 700,000 barrels of oil per day for local consumption and for exporting to Jordan. We will now increase this quantity by about 800,000 barrels, making our total production some 1.5 million barrels per day.

[Taqiyy-al-Din] What is Iraq's real production capacity at present?

[Rashid] At present it is 2.5 million barrels per day, which, despite the international embargo, will be 3 million barrels per day in three months' time. We expect to be able to export 800,000 barrels per day at $16 per barrel for three months. The humanitarian situation in Iraq will be assessed and we are convinced that, after negotiations, we will obtain at least a 50 percent increase, amounting to $1 billion. Therefore the volume that we are allowed to export will be increased from 800,000 barrels per day to 1.2 million barrels per day, to which the current local production and exports to Jordan amounting to another 700,000 barrels per day of will be added, making the production 1.9 million barrels per day after three months.

We are convinced that within four or six months, the special committee's chairman will be able to finalize the issue with us, because we are on the way to solving all the remaining problems. After six months and when it is time to move on to the implementation of Article 22 of Resolution 687, he will raise the limit allowed. Our production will then become 3 million barrels of oil per day after six months.

[Taqiyy-al-Din] This contradicts statements by the superpowers' representatives who consider Resolutions 986 and 687 to be unrelated, and who do not expect Article 22 to be implemented as you said. Is this wishful thinking on your part?

[Rashid] Resolution 986 has nothing to do with Resolution 687. This transition phase must pass before we achieve the implementation of Article 22, God willing. If Article 22 were to be implemented today, Resolution 986 would not be needed, and if, God forbid, Article 22 were to be implemented after a year, Resolution 986

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would have been valid for six months only. If that had been the case, Resolution 986 would have been intended for a year. Resolution 986 was formulated in preparation for implementing Article 22 of Resolution 687 (which lifts the international oil embargo on Iraq).

[Taqiyy-al-Din] We said that the current production capacity is 2.5 million barrels per day. What about Iraq's export capacity after the export harbors were hit?

[Rashid] Our current export capacity is very good. Al-Bakr harbor can export 1.2 million barrels per day now, and in a few weeks' time its export capacity will reach 1.6 million barrels per day. The Iraqi-Turkish pipeline can now export 1.3 million barrels per day. In a few months' time its export capacity will be 1.6 million barrels per day. If we add the two together, the export capacity will increase from the current 2.5 million barrels per day to over 3 million barrels per day in a few months' time.

[Taqiyy-al-Din] In accordance with the terms of the memorandum of understanding, you will be paying compensation. How much will that leave for Iraq?

[Rashid] Iraq will be left with some $20 million a month, and since there are 22 million Iraqis, the Iraqi citizen will have $10 worth of food per month.

[Taqiyy-al-Din] There are deals for improvements and prospecting for oil in Iraq which have yet to be signed, such as deals with the Total and Elf companies to improve the 'Umar river and Elf [as published] fields. Apparently, there is an Iraqi political decision to delay the signature of these deals in order to exert pressure on the governments of these states in the Security Council so that they help achieve a total lifting of the oil embargo on Iraq. Why were these deals with Total and Elf not signed, when talks are known to be at a very advanced stage?

[Rashid] Neither the companies nor ourselves have delayed signing these deals. Work and negotiations on these deals require time, a year or two for example. In Russia they were unable to sign a deal, and yet they have been negotiating for three years for partnership deals, because these included many complex and difficult economic elements.

[Taqiyy-al-Din] But you have been negotiating with them for three years?

[Rashid] The companies came to us four, not three, years ago. However, serious negotiations started only a year ago, and, in one year, we reached the stage of finalizing a deal. There are some issues, however, which need to be examined further. The friendly quarters and undoubtedly the Iraqi political and technical side genuinely intend to sign these deals.

[Taqiyy-al-Din] How many improvement deals are you about to sign?

[Rashid] We will not sign any deal before signing with friendly states. If a deal with a quarter that is not a friend is ready, we will first sign with the friendly states such as France.

[Taqiyy-al-Din] Your negotiations with Total and Elf concerning improving the 'Umar river and Majnun fields are at an advanced stage. Why have these deals not been signed? Will you be signing in six months' time, a year, or less?

[Rashid] When negotiations are taking place, we cannot discuss them. That is why I told you that I will not discuss the OPEC conference proceedings in Vienna. We have reached a very advanced and positive stage with both French companies.

[Taqiyy-al-Din] In practice, how do these companies estimate the capacity of the fields while the international embargo remains in place?

[Rashid] We have conducted technical studies which we have put to them. They too are analyzing this data and improving it. We may differ in the assessment and analysis, and this is an issue for negotiations, then there is the issue of negotiating for privileges. All this takes time.

[Taqiyy-al-Din] France is considered a friendly state, and yet it is one of the states which decided to impose the international embargo on Iraq. Is the French approach toward Iraq different?

[Rashid] France is a friendly state and has adopted positive positions. The ties are strong and deep, and it has been proved that difficult circumstances do not affect these strong ties.

[Taqiyy-al-Din] With regard to the deals for buying the oil that can be exported under Resolution 986, what quantities have the buyers requested from you so far?

[Rashid] They slightly exceed what we are allowed to export. Many companies have requested priority for buying quantities of oil exceeding what we are allowed to export.

[Taqiyy-al-Din] What stage have you reached in cooperating with the UN commission headed by Rolf Ekeus?

[Rashid] We are making serious efforts so that there is no longer any reason for the special commission to have any concerns or doubts about Iraq. As far as we are concerned, we fulfilled our commitments several years

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ago. The Security Council should have been advised that Iraq has implemented all its commitments. There are, however, some problems, which we are dealing with in a constructive and positive manner, and hence, Article 22 will be implemented in six months' time. We believe that the memorandum of understanding is a serious step toward lifting the total embargo. We have made serious efforts to implement Article 22. Although the memorandum of understanding is an adequate emergency step, we will not rest on our laurels and will continue with our efforts to ensure that Article 22 is implemented.

[Taqiyy-al-Din] There are rumors that exports of Iraqi oil to Jordan have ceased or will cease. Is this true?

[Rashid] On the contrary, I met with my Jordanian colleague, and we will not reduce our exports to Jordan by a single barrel. These are still around 70,000 barrels per day, in addition to the petroleum products exported from Iraq to Jordan.

Iraq: UNDP Official Urges Increased Oil Sales To Cover Expenses

JN0806105096 Baghdad INA in Arabic
0815 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 8 Jun (INA) — Muhammad al-Zijari [name as received], director of the United Nations Development Program [UNDP] in Iraq, said that the aggravated humanitarian conditions in Iraq under the sanctions regime require an increase in the financial ceiling provided for in the memorandum of understanding signed between Iraq and the United Nations.

In a statement to the newspaper AL-'IRAQ published today, al-Zijari described the signing of the memorandum as an important event in the relationship between Iraq and the international community. This will mitigate the current conditions in Iraq, he noted. He added that everyone is trying to expedite implementation of the memorandum of understanding and discuss procedures with Iraq in this regard as soon as possible.

In a previous statement made in the aftermath of the signing of the memorandum, the director of the UNDP program described the signing of the memorandum as an advance toward revoking the sanctions and toward rehabilitation of Iraq's role on the international scene.

Al-Zijari said that enormous amounts of money are needed for food, medicine, and humanitarian provisions, as well as for the rehabilitation of the Iraqi infrastructure destroyed by U.S. troops and their allies. He added that these amounts largely exceed the amount provided for in the current memorandum of understanding, which is $2 billion every six months, a high percentage of which will go to UN coffers.

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Israel: Netanyahu Plans To Order Ministers To Resign From Knesset

TA0806161996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu plans to pass the Norwegian law which states that all cabinet ministers must resign from the Knesset so as to permit new Knesset members to join the parliament, our party affairs correspondent Yaron Deqel has learned.

Netanyahu plans to order all ministers to resign from the Knesset except for the prime minister and ministers appointed to be his deputies. Our correspondent adds that the Likud has already discussed the matter with leaders of parties expected to join the coalition.

Israel: Netanyahu To Bolster PM's Office; Arens Not To Be Minister

TA0806174696 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 8 Jun 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu has decided that the Treasury's Budget Department, Israel Land Administration, Broadcasting Authority, and Channel 2 Television Network will be moved to the Prime Minister's Office. Our correspondent Shlomi Eldar reports that Ivet Lieberman, designated to be appointed director general of the office, will be in charge of these bodies.

Our correspondent adds that Moshe Arens has informed Netanyahu that he is not interested in becoming a cabinet member and prefers to advise and assist him on any issue and at any time he is asked. Our correspondent has learned that Netanyahu plans to bring two outsiders to run the finance and religious affairs portfolios, but it has still not been decided who they will be.

Netanyahu will meet with Tzomet leader Refa'el Eytan tomorrow morning and with Gesher leader David Levi in the evening. On Monday [10 June], he will meet with Ari'el Sharon. Our correspondent Dan Scemama reports that the prime minister-elect has announced that he does not plan to inform any of the ministerial candidates which portfolios they are destined for until the coalition talks are completed with the religious parties.

Israel: Netanyahu Reportedly To Give Tzomet 2 Portfolios

TA0906151596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1400 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In their meeting this morning, Binyamin Netanyahu and Refa'el Eytan agreed that Tzomet would receive two ministerial portfolios, but it is not known which ones. Our party affairs correspondent Yaron Deqel reports that the two agreed to keep it secret so as not to harm the coalition negotiations.

Prime Minister-elect Netanyahu is holding a long series of discussions with the defense establishment's senior echelon. Our correspondents Shlomo Raz and Yaron Deqel report that Netanyahu met with Chief of Staff Amnon Lipkin Shahaq; Mosad chief Dani Yatom; Shin Bet head 'Ami Ayalon; 'Uzi Dayan, commander of the Central Command; Major General Oren Shahor, coordinator of activities in the territories; and Brig. Gen. Ya'aqov 'Amidror, head of the Research Department in Military Intelligence. Maps were brought into one of the meetings.

Israel: 'Emerging' Government Composition Reported

TA0906171796 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 9 Jun 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Here is the emerging composition of Binyamin Netanyahu's government: David Levi, foreign minister and deputy prime minister; Yitzhaq Mordekhay, defense minister; Ari'el Sharon, expanded Construction and Housing Ministry; Refa'el Eytan, who will receive two portfolios; Natan Sharansky, Industry and Trade; Zvulun Hammer, Education and Culture; SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim], Interior and Labor and Welfare Ministries; NRP [National Religious Party], Communications Ministry. The big question of who the finance minister is to be remains unclear.

Israel: Future Foreign Minister Levi Says Peace 'Key Objective'

TA0906182096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1800 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] David Levi has been informed by Prime Minister-designate Binyamin Netanyahu that he will be appointed foreign minister and deputy prime minister. Levi said after meeting Netanyahu today that he is pleased with the appointment. Replying to our correspondent Yaron Deqel's question on whether his Foreign Ministry portfolio will be similar to the one today or be a slashed one, Levi said he is not fond of slashing.

Commenting on the summit meetings held by Arab countries, the foreign minister-designate said the Israeli people have made their choice, and since the peacemaking process and the effort to enhance peace are a key objective of the new government's policy, the Arabs

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have no reason to act as they have been recently. He hoped the new government would find a way to allay the Arab countries' apprehensions and to demonstrate its wish to promote peace.

Israel: Netanyahu's Office Reacts to Damascus Summit

TA0806181196 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 8 Jun 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The prime minister-elect's office responded to the joint statement of the Syrian-Egyptian-Saudi summit in Damascus by saying that Binyamin Netanyahu and his advisers have announced several times his commitment to the peace process and his plan to continue the negotiations along all tracks, including the Palestinian and the Syrian. It was also announced that the new government does not have any guidelines yet.

Our political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen reports that sources close to Netanyahu made it clear today that the prime minister-elect plans to evacuate Hebron as was agreed with the Palestinians and that the command work has already started.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1800 GMT on 8 June reports: "Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu's office denies reports that a decision has been made to withdraw from Hebron. No such decision has been made, a source said."]

Israel: Likud's Olmert — Damascus Summit Shows Arab 'Nervousness'

TA0806173696 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 8 Jun 96

[Remarks by Ehud Olmert, Jerusalem mayor and Likud Knesset member, on the joint statement issued by the Syrian-Egyptian-Saudi summit in Damascus, in Jerusalem on 8 June — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] The fact that it is taking place before the new government has been set up and before it has formally announced its guidelines, and after a very conciliatory and moderate speech by Binyamin Netanyahu at the Likud's victory convention, shows that there is nervousness on the other side because they understand that the relatively easy life they had with the outgoing government has ended and a new era has arrived. It is part of an anticipated and natural development, and we should not get excited about it.

Israel: Netanyahu's Bureau, Defense Sources on Arab Summit

TA0906053496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0400 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sources in Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu's bureau have said that Israel will react to the decisions made at the Arab summit in Damascus when the new government is installed. This announcement was made after Syria, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia decided to convene an Arab summit in Cairo.

Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz adds that yesterday Netanyahu and his aides carefully perused the decisions adopted at the Damascus summit and decided to publish an ambiguous response in order to avoid being dragged into unhelpful public exchanges.

Reacting to the Damascus summit, a senior military source said it was undoubtedly a show of force. The Arabs want to demonstrate that they are capable of achieving unity if the peace process fails to make progress or collapses. Israel has been following developments in the Arab countries very closely, the senior military sources said.

David 'Ivri, the director general of the Defense Ministry, who was commander of the Israel Air Force [IAF] at the time of the raid against the Iraqi nuclear reactor, 15 years ago this week, said that the IAF has a greater capability today. 'Ivri said that as soon as the United Nations lifts the sanctions against Iraq, Baghdad will again become a potential threat. The Defense Ministry director general added that Iran has been making every effort to get a nuclear capability. As for Syria, 'Ivri said that Damascus is continuing the arms race. The Syrians are purchasing surface-to-surface missiles and developing an independent capability to produce such missiles. Syria also has chemical warheads. Until a real and lasting peace is achieved, Israel has good reason to remain concerned. This week, David 'Ivri will receive a honorary doctorate from Technion for his contribution to the defense establishment.

Israel: Peres Tours North, To Meet Netanyahu 'This Afternoon'

TA1006113496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres toured the north this morning due to the tension prevailing in the area. This was reported by our political correspondent Shlomo Raz. Earlier today the prime minister held consultations with the senior security echelon in which the situation was assessed. This afternoon

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Peres will meet with Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu.

Israel: Diplomatic Effort To Prevent 'Inconvenient' EU Statement

TA1006113196 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 10 Jun 96 pp A1, A2

[Report by Aluf Ben and Gay Bekhor]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The EU foreign ministers will meet in Luxembourg today to prepare the European leaders' summit meeting next week in Florence. The foreign ministers will draft the final statement and agree on the policy the European leaders will present regarding the peace process and the Middle East.

Over the past several days, the Foreign Ministry has been making a diplomatic effort in European capitals to prevent the issuance of a detailed statement that would express stands Israel might find inconvenient, for example — demands that Jerusalem be partitioned, that Orient House activity continue, that the settlement drive be stopped, and that a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights be carried out.

EU officials disagree on whether they should issue a detailed political statement, a Florence Declaration, or settle for a statement generally expressing support for the peace process.

Israel asked that the EU declare that it generally supports the peace process, and make do with that. Israeli sources yesterday said they doubt that it would be wise for the EU to publish detailed European stands before the new government headed by Binyamin Netanyahu has been established, and even before its guidelines have been published. According to the Israeli sources, a detailed European stand issued at this stage would constitute intervention in issues that are up for negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. [passage omitted]

Major General Matan Vilna'i, deputy chief of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] General Staff, returned from a visit to Turkey yesterday. Tomorrow, he will brief the chief of staff and senior security elements on his visit. In the wake of the visit, military sources said that Israel wishes to deepen its military relations with Turkey.

President 'Ezer Weizman is leaving for Turkey tomorrow. He will meet Turkish President Suleyman Demirel and try to convince him not to give in to pressures and to continue to adhere to the military agreement with Israel. Political sources in Jerusalem said yesterday that Weizman's visit is important particularly at this time when Turkey is experiencing a government crisis and is under external pressures to cool down its relations with Israel. [passage omitted]

Israel: Ministry Views UK's Major Letter as 'Veiled Threat' to Ties

TA1006110996 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 10 Jun 96 p 5

[Report by Hemi Shalev]

[FBIS Translated Text] British Prime Minister John Major has sent a long and unusual letter to Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu urging Netanyahu to evacuate Hebron, meet Yasir 'Arafat personally, and take "early" steps to reinstate the Palestinian confidence in the peace process.

Senior Foreign Ministry officials who analyzed the letter determined that, although it is worded politely and with typical British "understatement," it is not "a letter of friendship," but a "clear and blunt message" that even includes a veiled threat to future trade relations between Israel and Britain if the peace process does not proceed. On their part, senior Likud members have recently started talking angrily about "international pressure" applied on Netanyahu's government even before it has been set up.

In his letter, Major congratulates Netanyahu on his election and even notes that he has noticed "increasing support" for him among UK Jews, regardless of their earlier political views. Major also invites Netanyahu to London, promising to give him "a warm and friendly" welcome.

At the same time, Major's letter makes it clear that it is important to "protect the confidence" of British businessmen in the peace process, and notes that their previous decisions were made in the wake of their "confidence in the peace between Israel and its neighbors, including the Palestinians." Major notes that 'Arafat had told him that he wishes to meet Netanyahu soon, and that he promised 'Arafat he would recommend this to the new Israeli prime minister.

Major calls on Netanyahu to help 'Arafat and "reduce support for the extremists" by taking immediate steps to ease the closure and allow the passage of persons and goods in the area of the Palestinian Authority. He asserts that these steps can be taken "without harming Israel's security interests," and asks Netanyahu "to avoid making steps that might diminish Palestinian confidence."

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Israel: 'Elements' Doubt Turkish Papers' Report on Pact Reevaluation

TA0906180996 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 9 Jun 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Two of Turkey's most influential newspapers report that their country's National Security Council has decided to reconsider the military agreement with Israel.

Our special correspondent in Istanbul Ehud Ya'ari reports that inquiries made by Israeli elements in the past 24 hours revealed that this report's veracity is questionable.

The Arab summit in Cairo will call on Turkey to revoke the agreement with Israel, which contains an implicit threat to Syria.

Israel: 2 Israelis Found Shot in Car in South Jerusalem

NC0906211696 Paris AFP in English 2110 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jerusalem, June 9 (AFP) - The bodies of two Israelis killed by gunfire were found in their car Sunday [9 June] near the Kefar Zekharya area of south Jerusalem, said police spokesman Eric Bar Hen.

An Israeli woman was also injured by bullets apparently fired from a passing car near Qiryat Mal'akhi, around 20 kilometers (15 miles) further south of Jerusalem, he added.

Israel: Further on Killing of 2 Qiryat Arba' Residents

TA1006050996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A Qiryat Arba' couple, Yaron and Efrat Unger, have been killed in a drive-by shooting close to Moshav Zekharya in the Bet Shemesh area. The couple's baby, who was sitting in the back seat, was unhurt. Police are searching for a vehicle that fled the scene in the direction of Hebron. There were also false reports of a second terrorist attack last night. Mark Weiss reports:

[Begin Weiss recording] The attack occurred last night at about a quarter past 2300 on the road between Gefen and Moshav Zekharya east of Bet Shemesh. Some 20 bullets were fired from a passing vehicle at the white Seat Ibiza car driven by the Qiryat Arba' couple Yaron and Efrat Unger. The couple were found dead in the car, but their baby son, less than one year old, who was sitting in the back seat, was unhurt and taken to Rehovot's Kaplan Hospital for observation. Hospital doctors said the baby was fine. About 15 bullets hit the car's front windscreens, and security officials believe that both an M-16 and a Kalashnikov automatic rifle were used in the attack. Police Commissioner Asaf Hefetz said police assume the shooting was a terrorist attack, and they believe the terrorist vehicle fled in the direction of Hebron, about 15 miles away. The police are searching for a white Mitsubishi car that was reported fleeing toward Hebron. Roadblocks were erected, and a wide-spread search is carried out in the area.

Shortly after the shooting, there were rumors of another terrorist attack with casualties near Hadera. A large number of police were called to the area, but after a thorough search the police announced that the reports had been a false alarm. [end recording]

Israel: IDF Closes Down Hebron Retail Market

TA1006113396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] this morning closed down the retail market located near the Jewish Quarter in Hebron due to security reasons. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that the IDF fears clashes may erupt between Jews and Arabs in Hebron due to the murder of the Unger couple.

Israel: Minister Sarid Condemns Chinese Nuclear Test

TA0806151696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1400 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Israel has added its voice to the international condemnation of the Chinese nuclear explosion. Environment Minister Yosi Sarid said that nuclear experiments pose the greatest threat to mankind and to the environment. No country should be permitted to carry out tests, which he described as dangerous, unnecessary, and unjustifiable. Sarid called on the UN Environmental Agency to put pressure on Beijing to cancel further tests.

Israel: Construction on New Settlement Neighborhood in Progress

TA1006062596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0500 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] On Hazayit Hill in north Efrat, bulldozers have been laying the groundwork to establish a residential neighborhood with hundreds of housing units. Our correspondent Gil Litman reports that the construction plan for the hill was originally approved by Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin. National Religious Party

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Knesset member Hanan Porat told our correspondent that his party will demand to revive the construction plans in other hills in the Efrat area as well. Efrat Mayor Yinon Ahiman said the demand for housing units in Hazayit Hill has increased after the elections. Renovation and expansion work has also begun at Rachel's Tomb in the last few days.

Israel: Arab Envoys To Meet in Tel Aviv To Assess Election Results

TA0906110796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 0930 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A meeting by the ambassadors and representatives of Arab states accredited to Israel will be held at the Jordanian Embassy in Tel Aviv on Wednesday [12 June] to assess the Israeli election results and the political change as well as the future of the peace process in the region. Our political affairs correspondent Sa'id Mu'addi says he meeting, which is the first of its kind, will be attended by the Egyptian and Jordanian ambassadors, the head of the Moroccan interest section, and the Tunisian and Mauritanian representatives. The Omani representative, who has returned to his country for reasons that were described as personal, will not participate in the meeting.

Israel: Baraq To Run for Labor Leadership; Ramon Criticizes Move

TA1006065696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq says he will run for leadership of the Labor Party. Baraq told a gathering of key Labor Party officials he has already begun organizing for the campaign. The meeting was attended by party leaders from Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Beersheba, as well as representatives from kibbutzim and moshavim. Today Baraq is convening another meeting, which will include cabinet ministers and Knesset members.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0500 GMT on 10 June adds: "Minister Hayim Ramon sharply criticizes Ehud Baraq's intention to bring forward the race for Labor's leadership. Minister Ramon told Qol Yisra'el that it is neither dignified nor polite to push Shim'on Peres out of the party. Ramon said there will undoubtedly be a change of guard in the party, but Shim'on Peres should be allowed to end his term in office in the most dignified way possible. Asked whether he will run himself or support 'Uzi Bar'am, Ramon said he does not plan to do anything until Shim'on Peres announces his intentions."

"Deputy Defense Minister Ori Or told Qol Yisra'el he supports Ehud Baraq's candidacy to the party leadership, because he is the only one who can quickly bring the party to a situation in which it will be able to compete against the Likud. Ori Or said the race for the party leadership should be held soon, but he emphasized that Shim'on Peres is the party chairman and the one who calls the shots, and those who think they can make shortcuts without his permission are mistaken."]

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Jordan: King on Peace, Arab Relations, Other Issues

NC0706180596 London MBC Television in Arabic 1705 GMT 7 Jun 96

[Interview with King Husayn of Jordan by 'Irfan Nizam-al-Din in Amman on the "Face to Face Dialogue" program on 7 June—recorded on 6 June]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Nizam-al-Din] Your Majesty King Husayn, we welcome you again to MBC television. We hope to hear frank answers regarding developments and the current crisis facing the Arab nation.

[Husayn] Thank you for giving me this chance to speak through this establishment, in which we take pride, to Arab citizens everywhere.

[Nizam al-Din] Your Majesty, the Arab nation is experiencing a shock after the Israeli elections. Yesterday you expressed optimism about the future. Is there any basis for this optimism?

[Husayn] There are causes for this optimism. First, the situation dictates that we should watch everything happening around us. I believe that overpessimism, or even pessimism, is out of place. What happened in Israel was the exercising of the constitutional right of every citizen to elect a prime minister, someone who will shoulder the responsibilities ahead. It is not a question of peace or opposition to peace. Peace is a fact in this part of the world and for everybody the peace process is irreversible. So there is no justification for pessimism at this stage. Let us leave it to time, which, God willing, will prove we are right.

[Nizam-al-Din] God willing. But the Israeli vote was interpreted as a vote against peace, although the election was held to choose a prime minister. Most [Israeli] reactions or statements have called for ending the peace process, especially on particular tracks. How do you explain this?

[Husayn] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres is a man we have long known, respected, and appreciated. He was preceded by a man who worked with me sincerely and honestly, a man who became a victim of his belief in the need to achieve the greatest peace in this part of the world. But Peres lost several elections that had nothing to do with peace. I believe that developments, which in many cases were regrettable, as they involved violence and counterviolence, have had a major impact. The situation is like this: There is a feeling that the elected prime minister represents opposition to the peace process. But by assuming these responsibilities and declaring commitment to what has so far been agreed upon, he and those he represents, as well as the rest of the Israelis [who voted for Peres] are now moving in the same direction. This may facilitate, it will facilitate, God willing, the achievement of a comprehensive peace in the entire region.

[Nizam al-Din] Your Majesty was perhaps the only Arab leader who met Netanyahu before the elections. I think you and Netanyahu have had a telephone conversation. There are reports that you met his envoy in Jordan two days ago on the eve of the tripartite summit [in al-'Aqabah]. What did the envoy carry to you and what is your impression about the new prime minister? Did you receive any assurances and general views regarding Netanyahu's approach to the peace process?

[Husayn] What I understood from our telephone conversation immediately after he won the election and also from the envoy who visited us was that they are moving toward peace and that it is a process from which there is no going back. I understood that they will implement, adhere to, and build on everything that has been agreed on so far. For me, this is reassuring.

[Nizam-al-Din] On every track?

[Husayn] Every track, God willing.

[Nizam-al-Din] Staying on the same subject, Your Majesty, President Clinton has contacted you and, perhaps, sent a message to you. You will travel to Washington to meet President Clinton. Do you believe the U.S. position will support your efforts to resume the peace process?

[Husayn] I was supposed to visit the United States for a family engagement, the graduation of one of my sons.

[Nizam-al-Din] Prince Hamzah?

[Husayn] Hashim. In light of developments I will visit Washington. Meetings with the U.S. President and high-level U.S. officials have been arranged. So it will also be a working visit, one of consultations and deliberations. I believe the United States will continue to back the march of a comprehensive peace in this region. This policy line is being pursued by everybody, be it in Europe, the United States, Russia, China, Japan, or anywhere else. This region is very important and must enjoy stability. An opportunity must be given to the people to build and enjoy what they missed for a very long time, during which their resources and energy were exhausted and they were denied the chance to lead a good life.

[Nizam-al-Din] I followed up the news conference and statement issued by the tripartite summit that concluded yesterday. There is some ambiguity regarding the results or the practical steps that you have agreed upon.

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[Husayn] You may be right in this analysis. The idea of this meeting was discussed in Sharm al-Shaykh because there were important issues that needed to be discussed on the Palestinian, Jordanian, and Egyptian levels, as they concerned these three parties. They relate to the coordination, cooperation, the humanitarian side of the issue, the economic aspect, etc. Hence the meeting in Cairo, which, thank God, was good. During that meeting it was agreed to hold the follow-up meeting. The meeting was held. I cannot say that specific measures were discussed to reach specific results. I can say that everybody showed a desire for coordination and cooperation.

[Nizam-al-Din] Before coming here I asked President Yasir 'Arafat in London about reports speaking of Palestinian-Jordanian differences and that Egypt tried to eliminate these differences.

[Husayn] And what did he say?

[Nizam-al-Din] He told me to ask King Husayn. He said: As far as I am concerned there are no differences.

[Husayn] And that is my answer too. Egypt is indeed the big sister and enjoys a special status in our Arab world. It is not surprising for Egypt to undertake this role and this effort, or any other effort, to close the Arab rank and serve the goal of achieving integration and cooperation on the Arab level. I wish them success and I will do my best in this regard because I believe that it is our duty to work in that direction. On the Palestinian-Jordanian level, there are no problems. Suspicions surface occasionally. To clear up suspicion, we will not interfere in the Palestinian issue. We will not impose ourselves on our Palestinian kin and brethren. After the Rabat summit I decided to let them assume their responsibilities directly toward their cause and their right on their national soil. We respect this. So I asked brother Yasir 'Arafat to stop talking even about the issue of confederation. This is because the suspicions that keep cropping up, regardless of the reasons, are not in line with the call for confederation or anything else. Thus the relationship will be established through trust, which will come by persevering in our stance. If there is any other way we can help, naturally, our Palestinian brothers are the closest to us and we are the closest to them. We are prepared to provide assistance and backing on every level. As for the political aspect, if we have any credibility we will use it to the best of our ability to serve the Palestinian cause and support our brothers in an attempt, which, God willing, will be successful, to achieve a just peace and secure Palestinian rights on Palestinian national soil.

[Nizam-al-Din] This is, of course, what you say. But the initial Likud program, particularly Sharon's, talks about the Jordanian alternative and option. In other words there is a tendency within Likud to talk about the Jordanian option and that they will negotiate with Jordan. There is another tendency that talks about Jordan as an alternative [homeland for the Palestinians]. If the peace process stops, God forbid, or if it grinds to a halt, there are fears that this would naturally affect Jordan. What are Your Majesty's ideas on this?

[Husayn] It is only natural that Jordan should be affected by everything that takes place around it or by what happens in the region. But I believe that talk about Jordan as an alternative homeland [for the Palestinians] is out of the question because we do not accept a role as an alternative for the Palestinians. Frankly speaking, had the issue been the responsibility of Jordan, and me personally, right after 1967, the chances of getting a big share were there for me. But at that time I refused to be part of a process that might eventually mean forfeiting one inch of Palestinian territory or any part of the Palestinian rights. This responsibility was taken off our shoulders in 1974. But the mission might be much more difficult than that. The decision was a Palestinian decision; the insistence was Palestinian insistence to shoulder their responsibility regarding attempts to retrieve their rights on their national soil. We respect and support this—that is with regard to the alternative homeland.

As for anything that has been said in the past or any trends some sides in Israel have shown, I believe that all of these led to the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, the new reality regarding the international borders, which were recognized for the first time, and our retrieval of our land and water rights. This is with regard to the Israeli-Jordanian angle. We praise God for these achievements, otherwise we might have found ourselves in difficulty under the current circumstances.

[Nizam-al-Din] Has everything that was agreed upon in the Jordanian-Israeli agreement been implemented?

[Husayn] Everything that was agreed upon has been implemented. Naturally, we are awaiting studies regarding many projects that are governed by location and the neighboring countries or that might be related to water, resources such as the minerals of the Dead Sea, and the Jordan valley rift from the north to the Gulf of Aqaba. All these are awaiting study. We will undoubtedly discuss them in detail for feasibility and to start accomplishing real progress in this country, so that the people here, in this country, who are highly qualified, can be given every chance of progress and can continue to be true Arabs who build and realize their goals and objectives. Peace does not frighten us. Peace does not frighten us, because we have self-confidence. When we

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give our people opportunities, we have the ability to achieve what we want.

[Nizam-al-Din] Can I understand from you, Your Majesty, that you do not agree with some of the accusations and comments that Jordan has been hasty, that it has signed separate agreements, or other such statements, particularly after the Israeli election result?

[Husayn] With regard to accusations that Jordan has signed separate agreements, they are not true. Many did before us. As for the starting point, we all started together along with our brothers in Syria and Lebanon, and we provided the umbrella for the Palestinians until the Palestinian brothers achieved their separate track and proceeded on their way. Egypt, of course, went ahead before everyone else in this direction and achieved its peace with Israel. This is when we had to look after our own interests and situation. Praise be to God, we achieved a peace that we believe is fair and honorable on the Jordanian-Israeli level through huge efforts on our part and as a result of the negotiating process, not through conditions some sides were trying to impose on us — that we must sign a piece of paper first and then start negotiations. This is why everything is organized and in place.

[Nizam-al-Din] Your Majesty, there is a rather thorny issue— that the Arabs and the Muslims will never accept giving up Jerusalem. Israel also says it will not give up Jerusalem, as evident from Netanyahu's statements yesterday. You proposed some time ago the issue of the holy shrines and supervision of these places. Later came the issue of religious custodianship. How can you get out of this crisis of Jerusalem, which is vital for every Arab and Muslim? I also realize Your Majesty's interest in this spiritual and religious issue.

[Husayn] Jerusalem has a special place in every Arab and Islamic heart and conscience as well as for all believers in the one and only God. The discussions that took place and proposals we made indicated that it is not reasonable for anyone to accept that only one side should have full control over the holy shrines for the followers of the three divine religions. Any state that attempts to create such a situation will be up against much opposition, which will make such a step impossible to realize. Despite what is being said and the situation these days, sovereignty over these holy places should be God's. These holy places should be a meeting place for the believers in the one and only God and followers of the three divine religions. I do not believe that God gave Jerusalem such importance that its past, as well as its future, would remain buried in history.

If we consider this aspect and if we look at the reality that the west of Jerusalem was always Israeli and the east an occupied part, then... [Husayn pauses] There are two aspects. The first is religious and notes that Jerusalem is a symbol of understanding and a meeting place for believers in God. The other is demographic and notes that Jerusalem is a symbol for the Palestinians and the Israelis. The east of Jerusalem has been occupied territory since 1967. I believe that if intentions are good, vision is clear, and there is the determination, an appropriate and acceptable formula can be found.

The issue of religious custodianship was not in that sense. It was a recognition of what this country has given and what we and this family will continue to give. We do not expect any return for this. We remained silent about the situation because it is not an issue of the Palestinian leadership in Jerusalem or of any differences between us and it. This leadership is still on the road to retrieving its right there. Had the situation been anything else, then there could have been a problem. Hence, the Jerusalem issue has not been resolved and is being left for the final stage of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiating process. There are also everybody's rights, and they concern the Arabs, Muslims, and, in a wider sense, the followers of the three divine religions. This should be dealt with in a proper and suitable way, otherwise tragedies will be repeated.

[Nizam-al-Din] The Palestinian-Israeli track features Hebron as a first stage. This is the first obstacle. Do you believe Israel will withdraw from Hebron?

[Husayn] What we have heard so far gives the impression that Israel is abiding by and committed to all that has been agreed on with the Palestinian side. I hope this assessment is in order, God willing. If it is not, then we must seek to achieve salvation for Hebron.

[Nizam-al-Din] There are explosive issues apart from the Palestinian state and the refugees, which of course will be a problem in future. How do you see the solution?

[Husayn] All the issues were explosive at first. Many mines have been removed from the road so far. God willing, the process will continue until they are all removed. The Palestinians feel they have a right to establish their state and have their own capital. This leadership is their leadership. We appeal to all of them to cooperate with it and to solve their problems by themselves in line with their affiliation with this leadership or to work with it. The most dangerous things they can face are, God forbid, divisions, differences, and interference by others in their affairs. They suffered from this in the past and I hope this stage is now over. The elections in the West Bank and Gaza strengthened the new reality with regard to the leadership and the Palestinian participation in the decisionmaking process.

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I pray to God to grant them success and pray that the [words indistinct].

[Nizam-al-Dim] Your Majesty, you said some time ago that real peace cannot be achieved unless it is one between peoples and not between governments. How can this be achieved, since Israel remains intransigent, rejects, and imposes its conditions on the Arabs and Muslims?

[Husayn] As far as we are concerned, we reached what is satisfactory and comfortable. As for Egypt, the same thing happened. As for the Palestinian side, [word indistinct] the stages agreed on. As for Lebanon, which is dear to us all, the commitment to withdraw from all the Lebanese territory, not to remain on a single inch of its territory, or to (?take) its water if the security problem is solved, has been reiterated. When this problem is solved then I believe the Lebanese Government will exercise its sovereignty over all its territory. As for the Golan, I believe that it is an issue of withdrawal in return for real peace. So where is the problem? I do not want to say that one side is responsible for the slowdown and sluggishness in reaching an agreement so far. But we hope the difficulties will be overcome and progress will be made on all the tracks, because we want a comprehensive and just peace in this region.

To achieve a result there must be different stances and interpretations and extreme demands at first until the situation evolves into something reasonable, logical, and acceptable to all.

On our level here, we believed that the leadership... [pauses] If I have an occupied territory, if I am responsible for an occupied territory, or if the Palestinians [words indistinct] to do the impossible then I cannot remain in an ivory tower while my people are under occupation and suffering. It is my duty to shoulder my responsibilities and search for every possible way to save the people and protect their dignity and right to life. It is in this way that we began negotiations with Israel. Contacts and efforts were made during the stages that preceded it in a bid to get to know the opposing side. That was a duty. When the Oslo and then Washington agreements came the direct search began at the highest responsible level in the country. In this way the signal reached everyone. It resulted in our retrieving our territory and rights. Another result is that there are no UN emergency forces or observers to monitor our behavior and sincere leanings. It also resulted in the removal of many psychological and other walls and barriers. We are still at the beginning of the road. But as for the result, one is [word indistinct] at this stage that behind this wall that was erected, for some logical and reasonable reasons, that there is another person who is suffering the same things, the same fears, [word indistinct] hence the removal of all that caused [words indistinct]. We stood fast in the most difficult circumstances. We went through many experiences. When we provide our youths with education and work opportunities in a climate that is different from the climate of a lack of confidence in tomorrow's gains, [words indistinct] then the disparity, or gap, will disappear. There is much work and creative potential available. The future is guaranteed.

[Nizam-al-Din] You know the mentality of the Israeli negotiator. Can Israel withdraw from the Golan or reach an agreement with Syria before the U.S. elections?

[Husayn] I have no idea. But, naturally, I referred to our method of negotiating. I believe that if discussions are held through a third party and not on the highest level, a solution could take longer.

[Nizam-al-Din] As for Lebanon, there is still an unresolved issue, one that could explode the so-called Grapes of Wrath or grapes of hatred. The monitoring committee is yet to be formed and there is now a new government in Israel. Do you think the committee will ever see the light?

[Husayn] I believe the committee must be formed. But all the sides should move seriously, shoulder their responsibilities, and try to find radical, basic solutions. Then there will be no need for committees, peacekeeping forces, or things like that. If confidence is established then I think the future will be [word indistinct].

[Nizam-al-Din] You recently complained that the Sharm al-Shaykh summit was a ceremonial gathering. But others believe the summit gave the green light for the Grapes of Wrath. What do you think?

[Husayn] The escalation started as the first session of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit got under way. The operation began [word indistinct] and then all kinds of mistakes were committed; this caused major tragedies and spoiled many things. Lebanon, with its good people, was again the primary victim. My feeling [at Sharm al-Shaykh] — and I wanted everybody to support it — was that a position should have been adopted [against terrorism] without us specifying addresses or naming states or leaders. But if that was the objective that major gathering expected everybody to stop protecting, practicing, and planning terrorism. Here in Jordan we suffer [terrorism]. Had it not been for the vigilance of our citizens and our responsible security quarters, we would have seen tragedies here. Enough. This method must stop and if not, then there is a mechanism to follow up things and to take whatever steps must be taken to end this tampering altogether.

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[Nizam-al-Din] Is there a mechanism? It would seem that the committees are frozen.

[Husayn] Sir, the mechanism is not laid down; it was practically frozen.

[Nizam al-Din] Your Majesty the King, if we return to the tripartite summit, is it true that Netanyahu will join the summit? Was a date fixed for your meeting with him?

[Husayn] It is probably premature to discuss this. The elections have just been held and their results announced. A government is yet to be established and we will see its features and inclinations. I believe the meeting will take place at some point. Will he join the tripartite meetings, that is, will the three-way meetings become four-way meetings? We will certainly hold high-level contacts with the Israelis soon. I think this also applies to Egypt. On the Palestinian level, contacts with the Israelis have begun. We could do anything to lay the cement and achieve real progress. We will not relinquish rights but we will be determined to achieve peace in this region, God willing.

[Nizam-al-Din] Concerning Syria, Your Majesty, it is said that there is Egyptian mediation between Jordan and Syria. Yesterday you spoke about your personal relationship with President al-Asad...

[Husayn interrupts] As for my personal relationship with brother President al-Asad, it has always been a relationship of fraternity, friendship, and mutual respect. But there are differences in our positions and interpretations of things, which we cannot deny.

[Nizam-al-Din] What about the Egyptian mediation?

[Husayn] There was no mediation as such but the brothers in Egypt think that it is now time we moved from small Arab summits to expanded ones. We hope this will be achieved.

[Nizam-al-Din] What about the Damascus tripartite summit?

[Husayn] Your guess is as good as mine.

[Nizam-al-Din] Perhaps the participants in the two summits will get together.

[Husayn] God willing. God willing. We support every meeting or get-together in this...

[Nizam-al-Din interrupts] We heard reports this week that there is a plan to hold a minisummit to be attended by 11 or 12 countries.

[Husayn] Let us wait so as not to get too optimistic or, God forbid, get disappointed and speak in a language of despair. One thing is sure: This nation must get together and cooperate on the highest level, for this is the road to build the future and achieve Arab integration, God willing.

[Nizam-al-Din] Your visit to Turkey is the subject of some interpretation. It is being said that you plan another visit.

[Husayn] Our relations with Turkey are close, long-standing, and strong. It was an ordinary visit. God willing, we will continue to visit and they will visit us. There is nothing wrong in this.

[Nizam-al-Din] There was some apprehension about the Israeli- Turkish agreement.

[Husayn] For some reason there has been some exaggeration in portraying this agreement and in reaching conclusions about it. I do not believe there is anything to worry about in it. For instance, we have had a similar agreement with Turkey for 17 years. The agreement goes in the same direction in terms of joint courses, cooperation, and getting acquainted with one another. So there is really nothing that deserves all this uproar [words indistinct].

[Nizam-al-Din] Concerning Iraq, there was talk about a federation or a confederation. Then there was some talk about an opposition conference. So far nothing has happened. How can Iraq emerge from this dark tunnel?

[Husayn] May God help Iraq and the people of Iraq, those men and women who have suffered much. Again and in brief, sir, all that we endeavor to achieve and all that we wish to see is for Iraq to preserve its national unity, territory, and sovereignty over its territory in full. We hope that with the efforts of all its peoples, God will save Iraq from this darkness it is experiencing, whether in terms of the external siege surrounding it or any other aspect relating to denying Iraqis democracy and multiplicity, which are among the pillars of human rights and respect for them.

[Nizam-al-Din] Is there a proposed alternative to the current situation?

[Husayn] The only thing I wish all the brothers would do, and that I may share with them, is encourage the dialogue among the Iraqis to reach a formula acceptable to them all to build the future they dream of.

[Nizam-al-Din] Has an opposition conference been ruled out or will it be held soon?

[Husayn] There was no talk about an opposition conference. The issue is not one of opposition. The issue is how to preserve the fabric and how could Iraq go through what it is going through now, considering that it has such a location and is of such importance. It is

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surrounded by parties that have goals, objectives, and justified or unjustified concerns, and they may even have some plans. The issue is how to [word indistinct] from its current situation so that it can return in good shape to its nation. This is the issue.

[Nizam-al-Din] It is being said that Iraq has imposed conditions on you, such as removing the prime minister, according to reports published in this regard.

[Husayn] It has neither imposed conditions on us nor talked to us about these issues. The dialogue was one-sided all the time, when we were offering advice to our brothers in the Iraqi leadership, but they chose their own way and never responded, not once. Perhaps the situation would have been different had they engaged in a dialogue.

[Nizam-al-Din] Is there no pressure or fear of operations against Jordan?

[Husayn] We have been facing operations all our life. We fear nothing.

[Nizam-al-Din] Your Majesty, let us move on to another issue, namely, Jordan's relations with the Gulf countries, particularly following your visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It appears that there are constant contacts and messages. We would like to hear first Your Majesty's assessment of the Saudi-Jordanian relationship and the results of contacts.

[Husayn] Saudi-Jordanian relations are stronger than ever. There is a determination and a strong will on both sides, the brothers, the one family, to build these relations on strong bases and not give any side the opportunity to tamper with these ties from near or far. Our approach is one of frankness, of discussing everything that serves our interests, of reviewing any issue that might be ambiguous at any stage of our cooperation, with all our might and resources, and therefore achieve equality, God willing. I am very satisfied, very grateful, and very happy with the achievements made so far. I am confident that this relationship will be an exemplary one in the days to come, God willing [words indistinct].

[Nizam-al-Din] Are there new practical steps?

[Husayn] Yes. There are constant meetings and contacts on every level.

[Nizam-al-Din] The higher committee will be meeting.

[Husayn] God willing, soon.

[Nizam-al-Din] Does this apply to the Gulf countries?

[Husayn] It applies to the Gulf. The situation will return to normal with Kuwait soon. They say in Kuwait that frankness leads to reconciliation. We are ready to be frank and are looking for someone to have a frank talk between us. We have not spoken frankly to the brothers there nor have they so far. We are ready when they are ready. I felt that the Kuwait leadership, Government, and people have a [word indistinct] desire that we should finally overcome the difficult stage and [words indistinct]. We hope all the Kuwaitis are now convinced that we care about them and that we could not have accepted the disappearance of Kuwait from the map. On the contrary, we opposed the aggression and the occupation. Our effort at first was always one of trying to resolve the issue on the inter-Arab level. But things took their own course. This stance on Kuwait could not be interpreted as anything, but one of love and goodwill.

[Nizam-al-Din] Are there efforts on your part on the issue of Kuwaiti prisoners or any information about them?

[Husayn] By God, I tried for years but no one replied.

[Nizam-al-Din] There were no replies?

[Husayn] No replies.

[Nizam-al-Din] But it was said that Husayn Kamil [Saddam Husayn's late son-in-law] gave information about the presence of prisoners.

[Husayn] He gave information that was disturbing, in my view. He said he did not have any exact knowledge of the issue but believed there was large-scale liquidation.

[Nizam-al-Din] I have taken much of your time Your Majesty but if you will permit me I would like to ask two questions about Jordanian affairs. During my visit to Kuwait I noticed that there was talk about government change. Then you voiced your confidence in the government some time ago. What are the facts of the issue?

[Husayn] This is the absolute fact. This is a new team that is working faithfully and living up to our expectations. This is a long process. What this government is doing is building on what was built in the past by other governments. The team is not only in the government. On all the sensitive sites in this country there are sincere and faithful people in whom we have absolute confidence. They are the hope. I will always care, especially after going through this age, about keeping in touch with the youth. I trust their hope in us will remain in place and that their self-confidence and their confidence in the inevitability of attaining their objectives will remain, a confidence based on reality. Therefore one of this government's efforts is to achieve this link and live up to everyone's expectations.

[Nizam-al-Din] Your Majesty, concerning the Jordanian media, some complain that there is some kind of chaos

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or unacceptable behavior. People wonder whether the new Press and Publication Law will be issued. What is your position on this?

[Husayn] I believe the law will be sent to the House of Representatives soon. I think this is a very modern law that will organize things in the right way. Then the media will not be for the State. God willing, the media will be in the hands of responsible people who can perform their role in serving the homeland and the nation and in reflecting the true picture of this country. As for mistakes, excesses, and [word indistinct], they are, regrettably, numerous. I believe the general atmosphere is one of disapproval of some recent trivialities and deterioration on the part of the media. As for me, [words indistinct] I hope our media will be above all this — media for the nation — and that journalists will uphold right, credibility, honesty and construction, calling for Arab unity and integration. I am not generalizing here but the fact is that we have seen some unpleasant things in the media.

[Nizam-al-Din] Your Majesty, perhaps Jordan was one of a few countries that undermined extremism. Many other Arab countries are still suffering this phenomenon. Why do we have this problem and how can we solve it on the local and Arab levels?

[Husayn] I believe that by concentrating on Man and his value and importance in helping to build the future, these phenomena will disappear. Naturally, poverty and destitution may largely pave the way for despair and extremism. But, God willing, we will have a promising and good future.

[Nizam-al-Din] Some countries, like Bahrain for example, have recently been complaining of Iranian interference in their internal affairs. What is Jordan's position on this?

[Husayn] Naturally, we are against any such interference. Perhaps we are suffering some aspects of this interference. We were not in a position to say anything. We sense some excesses beyond the boundaries of normal relations between states. Iran is part of this picture. But, God willing, this will end.

[Nizam-al-Din] Has Bahrain given you any new information about the conspiracy to overthrow the Bahraini Government?

[Husayn] Today we received a message from the Bahraini leadership and the brothers there. (?It contains some details.)

[Nizam-al-Din] There are indications that Iran is involved in the plot.

[Husayn] There is a reference to this role, (?to Iran), and to the training of some elements in a fraternal Arab country.

[Nizam-al-Din] Your Majesty, finally, and from your long experience, would you like to address a last word to your Arab nation in this difficult time?

[Husayn] We rely on God the Almighty. We have great hopes that this nation will pass every test, that cooperation and integration will be achieved, and that the nation will, God willing, reoccupy its position among nations. Thank you.

[Nizam-al-Din] And a word for MBC Television viewers?

[Husayn] Greetings and best wishes to all of them. I hope MBC will be a channel for communications among Arab officials and will always meet their demand for correct and accurate information. I hope it will always serve as a forum for positive and constructive dialogue. We have only gratitude and appreciation for you.

[Nizam-al-Din] Thank you, Your Majesty, and may God grant you success in your efforts.

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Lebanon: Israeli Patrol Ambushed; Casualties Reported

NC0906084696 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0800 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At 0930 [0630 GMT] today, the Martyrs of the Qana Massacre Group ambushed an Israeli patrol which was on its way from al-Rayhani barracks to the al-'Ayshiyah barracks. A statement issued by the resistance notes that when the patrol arrived at the ambush point it was attacked by the resistance fighters, using machine guns and rockets. The statement adds that the resistance men managed to hit two vehicles and inflict several casualties.

Lebanon: 'Terrorists' Fire Missiles at IDF Patrol; No Casualties

TA0906093696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Terrorists fired several antitank missiles at an IDF [Israel Defense Forces] patrol in south Lebanon this morning. There were no casualties.

Our correspondent in the north Ilan Ro'e reports that an IDF armored vehicle was lightly damaged. SLA [South Lebanese Army] and IDF artillery retaliated by shelling terrorist targets north of the security zone.

Lebanon: SLA Soldier 'Badly Wounded' by Roadside Bomb

TA0906102796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] An SLA [South Lebanese Army] soldier was seriously wounded in south Lebanon today by a roadside bomb. Our correspondent in the north Ilan Ro'e reports that an SLA force, which was on a operation in the Bayt Yahun area in the security zone's western sector, triggered a roadside bomb. One soldier was badly wounded in the explosion. He was transferred to a hospital in northern Israel. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: Radio Reports Israeli Helicopter Overnight Flights

NC0906191796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1900 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Four Israeli helicopters, escorted by two fighter planes, flew for 45 minutes over the villages of the central sector of southern Lebanon at 2100 [1800 GMT] today.

Lebanon: 'Great Tension,' Explosions, IAF Activity Reported in South

TA1006044796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0400 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Great tension is reported in south Lebanon's security zone since early this morning. Our correspondent Ilan Ro'e reports that sounds of explosions can be heard in the area and Israel Air Force [IAF] helicopters are overflying the area.

Lebanon: 'Tense Calm' Reported in South After 'Intense' Bombardment

TA1006075496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0700 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Tense calm prevails in south Lebanon at the moment after hours of intense Israeli artillery bombardment on terrorist targets in the al-Nabatiyah and Tuffah area. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: SLA Soldier Wounded in 9 Jun Blast; Israeli Patrol Attacked

NC1006073696 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 0700 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A South Lebanese Army [SLA] soldier was wounded yesterday when an explosive device planted by terrorists near the road at the Bayt Yahun post went off.

Two antitank rockets were fired at an Israeli army patrol in al- Rayhan area. There were no casualties.

Lebanon: Sergeant Killed in Shelling; 'Resistance' Attacks Patrol

NC1006091796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0800 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The military situation grew volatile today as the occupation forces bombarded the city of al-Nabatiyah and Iqlim al-Tuffah villages. The bombardment killed Lebanese Army Master Sergeant Nash'at Hammud.

NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY [NNA] correspondent in al-Nabatiyah 'Ali Badr-al-Din has the details:

[Begin Badr-al-Din recording] Israel again violated the April Understanding when its occupation forces' artillery shelled residential areas in al-Nabatiyah, Kafr Rumman, al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa, and 'Arab Salim. The shelling targeted a dairy van on the main 'Arab Salim-Habbush road, killing Lebanese Army Master Sergeant Nash'at Hammud and wounding the driver, 'Ali Nasib Farhat.

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At 0400 today [0100 GMT] the Israeli occupation forces' artillery emplacements in al-Zaffatah and Mashru' al-Tayyibah inside the occupied land began to bombard the outskirts of al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa, the Lebanese Army's derelict barracks, and the eastern neighborhood of Kafr Rumman. The Israeli occupation forces intensified their attacks at 0530 by shelling the Nab' al-Tasah basin, the suburbs of Habbush, 'Arab Salim, al-Jabal al-Rafi', and the al-Sitt Zubaydah Bridge that links al-Nabatiyah and Iqlim al-Tuffah areas. A civilian car received a direct hit and Lebanese Army Master Sergeant Nash'at Hammud from the town of Mlikh, a resident of 'Arab Salim, was martyred. The driver, 'Ali Nasib Farhat from 'Arab Salim, suffered various injuries and was taken to a Sidon hospital.

The Israeli artillery targeted residential areas in al-Nabatiyah, where a shell landed on the home of 'Abd Muruwwah near the al-Nabatiyah gendarmerie company. It did not explode. The violent Israeli shelling of al-Nabatiyah paralyzed business activities and people's movement. Exploding shells could be heard in villages far from the targeted areas. People were more frightened by Israeli fighter aircraft and helicopters' intense flights over the south. The aircraft conducted several mock raids over al-Nabatiyah and Iqlim al-Tuffah while an MK reconnaissance plane appeared in the air.

The Islamic Resistance announced that it ambushed an Israeli infantry patrol on the al-Dabshah-al-Khardali Road, killing or wounding at least 10 Israeli soldiers. The resistance said it used machine guns and rockets in its attack on the Israeli patrol. This is 'Ali Badr-al-Din at the NNA office in al-Nabatiyah. [end recording]

Lebanon: Hizballah Statement Says 5 Israeli Soldiers Killed

NC1006090096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0810 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut, 10 Jun (MENA)—South Lebanon erupted violently at dawn today after five Israeli soldiers were killed and six were wounded when a group of Hizballah's Islamic Resistance attacked a patrol of the Israeli occupation forces in the al-Dabshah area.

Hizballah issued a statement this morning claiming responsibility for killing and wounding Israeli troops on the al-Dabshah road, saying a group of its fighters carried out the attack.

The Hizballah statement added that its members attacked a patrol of the occupation forces on the road between al-Khardali and al-Dabshah inside the occupied border strip.

According to Lebanese military sources in south Lebanon, a Hizballah fighter, who had been lying in wait, neared the patrol and fired bursts of machine-gun fire, killing five soldiers and wounding six others.

The security sources added that Lebanese Army Sergeant Nash'at Hammud was martyred this morning when his car was hit by an Israeli artillery shell on the 'Arab Salim road. The Israelis were firing from their position at al-Suwayda' inside the occupied border strip. The sources added that the Israelis bombarded the Iqlim al-Tufffah hills, the wooded areas of Sujud, al-Rayhan, Jabal al-Rafi', the outlying parts of 'Arab Salim, the Habbush River basin, the woods of Kafr Rumman, al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa, and the Lebanese Army's deserted barracks in al-Nabatiyah between 0400 and 0700 today.

The sources said the shelling was accompanied by machine-gun fire against the wadis and woods of the area. Two shells fell in al-Nabatiyah's residential areas.

Israeli combat aircraft overflew the area and conducted several mock raids. There were also overflights by Israeli helicopters and pilotless reconnaissance drones.

A Hizballah spokesman described the Israeli shelling of civilian areas in the south as a flagrant violation of the April Understanding. He hinted at the possibility of resuming Katyusha attacks on northern Israel.

Last night's Israeli bombardment was directed against Iqlim al-Tuffah. It lasted until dawn and was accompanied by extensive helicopter overflights and the dropping of flares.

Lebanese Resistance fighters yesterday attacked the Israelis on the road between al-'Ayshiyah and al-Rayhan and detonated an explosive device under an Israeli foot patrol on the Bayt Yahun-Kunin road, wounding several troops.

Israeli radio admitted the attack and said that one Israeli soldier and three South Lebanese Army troops were wounded.

Lebanon: Further on Hizballah Statement; Attacks May Resume

NC1006101996 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0915 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah asserted in a statement that it will escalate its operations to force Israel to withdraw from Lebanon. The statement said Hizballah will turn south Lebanon into a volcano to expel the occupier and those who help him.

AFP cites a spokesman for Hizballah saying the Israeli shelling that targeted civilians was a blatant violation

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of the April Understanding, hinting at the possibility of resuming the firing of Katyusha rockets at northern Israel.

[Paris AFP in English at 0935 GMT on 10 June reports the following: In Beirut, a Hizballah spokesman described the 'Israeli bombardments on civilian targets' as a 'blatant violation of the April (1996) understanding,' hinting that the fundamentalist group might resume its Katyusha rocket attacks on north Israel."]

Lebanon: Al-Asad Orders Hizballah Not To 'Provoke' Israelis

TA0706112496 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 7 Jun 96 p 5

[Report by Smadar Peri]

[FBIS Translated Text] A senior Syrian Army officer, General Ghazi Kan'an, is currently conducting secret talks with the heads of Hizballah in Lebanon which aim to stop terror and other activities against Israeli targets.

YEDI'OT AHARONOT has learned that the discussions between Gen. Kan'an, commander of the Syrian forces in Lebanon, and Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah are being held upon the instructions of Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, whom Gen. Kan'an directly updates.

It has been further learned that al-Asad has ordered the senior Syrian officer to conduct the talks in secret so as not to lead to a counter reaction by leaders in Tehran who, on the eve of the Israeli elections, agreed with Syria to step up Hizballah attacks and terror activity against Israeli targets.

Al-Asad delivered an unequivocal message to the Hizballah leaders that said if they act against Israel contrary to his instructions, he will send Syrian soldiers to disarm those "who disobey orders."

It appears that, in view of Binyamin Netanyahu's rise to power, Syria wants to achieve quiet and not provoke Israel into launching a military operation.

Lebanon: Hizballah's Antigovernment Positions, Remarks Criticized

NC0806160196

[FBIS Report] Beirut AL-SHIRA' in Arabic, which for some time has been observed to be a strong supporter of Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri's policies and a critic of Hizballah's positions toward al-Hariri's government, publishes in its 3 June edition two articles sharply critical of Hizballah and its Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah.

In a 1,500-word article headlined "Yes to Resistance, but Hizballah..." on pages 4 and 5, Chief Editor Hasan Sabra says Hizballah is fighting both Israel and the Lebanese state, the first with katyushas and the second with excesses. He writes: "No sane person can believe that Hizballah, which is fighting Israel in the occupied south with an envious competence and undoubted heroism, and which is offering dear sacrifices, is the same Hizballah that is using every opportunity to smash the Lebanese state and its institutions." He adds: "It is as though Hizballah is suffering from schizophrenia, making the right decisions against Israel and the wrong decisions against the Lebanese state at the same time." He says that after the recent Israeli operation in Lebanon, Hizballah "lost its balance" and the respect of the Lebanese when it tried, with showing-off and sensational media statements, to portray itself as a rival of the Lebanese state.

Sabra charges that Hizballah was trying to use the results of the Israeli operation — people's support for the state and for resistance in general — to its own advantage. He says the party was not happy to see the Lebanese state emerge stronger and more unified after the Israeli attack. "Hizballah's fanaticism and narrow-minded approach made it believe that a stronger country and state necessarily means a less significant and a less influential Hizballah," he says. He adds that Hizballah considered itself the main loser from the cohesion of state institutions, especially the harmony between the executive and legislative branches. Sabra writes: "Hizballah's leadership believed that when the people stood fast in the face of Zionist aggression, supported the confrontation against this aggression, and rejected surrender, they were lending their support for Hizballah. But Hizballah's leadership failed to take positions that would help the citizens support their state and institutions. Indeed, it deliberately helped divide the institutions and push them backward."

A 400-word article, signed with the pen name "Hadaqah," on page 9 mocks Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah's remark that Prime Minister al-Hariri must improve his vocabulary and learn Arabic composition when he talks about resistance. The writer says Lebanese schools and educational establishments now have a rare opportunity to use Nasrallah as a composition professor. In a reference to Nasrallah's links with Iran, the writer says the newly discovered composition genius can teach both Arabic and Persian composition. He says: This is a young teacher full of enthusiasm. In his lessons, he never cares about anything, and he uses all methods, acceptable or unacceptable, agreeable or disagreeable. "Had Lebanon discovered this composition wizard a long time ago,"

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says the writer, "it would have become a pioneer of new literary and composition schools that adopt the language of slander, fabrication, and accusation."

Lebanon: Al-Hariri Discusses Relations With Jordan, Syria

JN0906204096 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 9 Jun 96 pp 1, 7

[Report by P.V. Vivekanand]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut—Jordanian-Lebanese relations remain as strong as ever and Beirut is ready to coordinate with all Arabs its moves for peace with Israel, says the Lebanese prime minister, Rafiq al-Hariri.

The Lebanese prime minister also said he was not aware of any plans by the Jordanian prime minister, 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti, to visit Lebanon during the height of the Israeli blitz on that country in April, but noted that he was mostly abroad during that period.

He said "nothing has changed" in the relationship between the Kingdom and Lebanon despite arguments from some quarters that Beirut, acting upon Syrian pressure, had sought to scale down its ties with Amman.

"Our relations with Jordan were never different from what they are today," said Mr. al-Hariri in an interview with Jordan Times and the Japanese Sapio magazine.

"We exchange ambassadors, we exchange sometimes visitors, we have commerce and economic relationship...," he said.

"Nothing has changed in fact," after the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty in October 1994, said Mr. al-Hariri. "We kept the ambassador and we kept the correct commercial relationship and there is nothing new."

Mr. al-Hariri said he was not aware of any plans by Mr. al-Kabariti to visit Beirut at the height of the Israeli assault on Lebanon in April.

"I don't recall that he had asked to come," said Mr. al-Hariri. At the same time, he said don't forget that I was travelling outside the country during most of the Israeli aggression."

Reports at the time said Mr. al-Kabariti had wanted to visit Beirut to express Jordan's solidarity with Lebanon against the Israeli blitz but that Syrian pressure had prompted the Lebanese government to be cool to the proposal.

Mr. al-Hariri also ruled out any separation between the Lebanese and Syrian tracks of peace negotiations saying he feared his country would be left alone to deal with Israel if Syria strikes its own peace accord with the Jewish state.

At the same time, he said, the Lebanese army was capable of taking over security in South Lebanon if Israel were to withdraw from the areas it occupies there.

That effectively meant a renewal of an offer that Mr. al-Hariri himself and President Ilyas al-Hirawi had been making to Israel over the past two years.

But Israel, which maintains that its occupation of a so-called security zone in South Lebanon is aimed at defending its northern settlements against guerrilla attacks, argues that such an offer has never been made formally.

"That is not true," said Mr. al-Hariri and referred to the Lebanese demand for the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 425 which called for a complete Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territories following an invasion by the Jewish state in March 1978.

Reminded that Israel had been maintaining that Resolution 425 was as dead letter, Mr. al-hariri said:

"It means that they do not recognise the United Nations resolution..., which is effectively asking Israel to withdraw from the south without any conditions.

"All they have to do is to say they are willing to implement Resolution 425, and the government of Lebanon is ready and is willing to take over security in southern Lebanon."

However, such a deal could not be achieved on the Lebanese front away from Syria, he said.

"Our interest is to work together with the Syrians," he said. "If we say that we want to separate our negotiations from the Syria track will be separated from our track. Then what will stop the Syrians from making a separate deal with Israel?"

In the context of prospects for the peace process, Mr. al-Hariri described as not encouraging at all the political programme of the newly elected premier of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu.

"If he does not change his political platform and orient it towards peace, then, I believe, we have a serious problem," he said.

"So far, he has not sent any positive signal," he added. "From our side, we are ready and open. We are willing. We believe that peace for Lebanon is highly important, and we know that Lebanon will benefit most from peace. But we cannot make peace alone. it needs two people to make peace."

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Asked how soon he envisaged Lebanon, which remains largely under Syria control, exercising its sovereign rights and advance towards peace with Israel, Mr. al-Hariri said.

"Lebanon and Syria have common interests. So Far, till today, Israel has been an enemy. We'd like to make peace with Israel.

"(But) why should I give Israel, which only a few weeks ago, have been bombarding our cities and killing our civilians, the opportunity to come between Lebanon and Syria and take advantage our differences, if there is any?"

Describing Lebanon and Syria as victims of Israeli aggression, he said: "The least we can do is to join our efforts to get rid of the Israeli occupation. This is the least we can do."

Furthermore, he said, "we are all Arabs. We have common national interests, we have historic relations...we have geographical relations, we have economic relations."

Lebanon is genuinely interested in making peace, he said. "But the question is: Does Israel want peace?

"So far we don't see any sign that Israel wants peace, a comprehensive, global and just peace...," said the prime minister.

"On the one hand it is talking about peace while on the other it is occupying part of the Golan Heights. This is not peace. There cannot be any peace without Israel withdrawing from the Arab territories."

Mr. al-Hariri, who took office in 1990 after warring Lebanese factions signed a Saudi-sponsored peace agreement to end the country's 17-year civil war, said his ambitious programme to reconstruct Lebanon was on course.

He said his programme was three-pronged; improving the image of Lebanon and restoring lost credibility, restructuring the country's army and security forces so as to take over South Lebanon as and when Israel evacuates the area and rebuild the country's devastated infrastructure.

On the first prong, he noted, he had visited "tens of countries" to improve the image of Lebanon and restore confidence in the country, and, as a result, increased investments are flowing in.

On the second count, he said, "the Lebanese army is strong enough to take over security of South Lebanon if Israel withdraws."

"Our security forces are assuming their roles more and more and the building of the infrastructure is going on," he added. "We have tunnels, we have bridges, we have roads, we have repaired most of the electricity network. We now have the telephones working in most of the country.

"We need more telephone lines, but this is a situation in any country in the world. We are rebuilding and expanding the airport, the sea port, downtown (Beirut), the city centre. All these things are under construction and because of all these, the private sector is moving ahead and they are investing."

Lebanese political situation is very healthy and parliamentary elections in September "will give the country a better image than the one before and will strengthen the unification of the country more," he said.

The image of Lebanon as an Iranian-influenced country is "exaggeration," he said.

As to the presence and activities of the pro-Iranian Hizballah in Lebanon, which is fighting the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon, he said: "We do not agree with the political programme of Hizballah. But the reality is that they are there as long as the occupation is there. This is not affecting the country at all. You can go around, you can circulate anywhere. You don't see Iranians. They are here like anyone else, they are not more than anyone else."

Lebanon: Buwayz Meets U.S. Ambassador, Comments on Damascus Summit

NC0706125396 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1115 GMT 7 Jun 96

[Report by Jinan Kharrat from the Foreign Ministry on 7 June—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz has said that the least the Arab summit that is being held in Syria can do is pave the way for resolving some Arab problems in preparation for a comprehensive Arab summit. Buwayz held a news conference at the Bustrus Palace [the Foreign Ministry] this afternoon in which he also said that we are now entering a stage of waiting and anticipation in which the Israeli policy will be reformulated. He said the resolution of the operations in the south can only be done by foiling the Israeli policy.

On the fate of the April Understanding, Buwayz said that it is a transitional understanding in the filed that will be implemented in stages. It does not touch on the heart of the political issue, which is the peace process and Resolution 425. If Netanyahu has the will to proceed with the peace process, then he must move on it in accordance with this operation.

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On parliamentary elections in Lebanon, Buwayz said: We call for a united election law for the whole of Lebanon irrespective of the contents of this law. Minister Buwayz said:

[Begin Buwayz recording, in progress] ...that the meeting which will take place is a preparatory meeting for a more expanded Arab summit. It is a meeting in which attempts will be made to resolve some of the problems most of which started during the Gulf war. These problems still exist to this day. This meeting is expected to establish a background for an expanded Arab meeting based on new principles that address the new developments and challenges. [end recording]

Before his statement, Minister Buwayz met with U.S. Ambassador Richard Jones, who said he and Buwayz discussed developments in the region. He assured that his country is committed to reactivating meetings to form the monitoring committee in Washington as soon as the pending problems are resolved.

Lebanon: Buwayz Says U.S. Can 'Adjust' Netanyahu's Policy

NC0906115696 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1030 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz has said that Lebanon did not take part in the recent meeting in Damascus because it was organized as a preparatory meeting for the expanded summit and not as a collective Arab summit.

Moreover, Buwayz expressed his belief that the United States can adjust Netanyahu's policy according to certain criteria if it wants to.

He warned the Arabs who went far in their concessions and their rush [toward Israel] that they should reconsider their positions, otherwise Israeli extremism will result in an Arab reaction.

Lebanon: Al-Hirawi Notes 'No Progress' in Talks With Israel

NC0806164296 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1530 GMT 8 Jun 96

[Remarks by Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi after a meeting with Maronite Patriarch Mar Nasrallah Butrus Sfayr in Bkirki on 8 June—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Everyone is fully aware of what is happening in the Middle East. We must not make hasty assessments, enter into labyrinths, or engage in speculations. We must wait to see the shape and inclination of the new Israeli Government. Will it include hawks or doves? We, his beatitude the patriarch, and everyone loyal to Lebanon went to the Madrid peace conference because we are seeking a just and comprehensive peace. We want to regain the occupied land. Lebanon did not go to Madrid to discuss Security Council Resolution 425. That resolution does not force the Lebanese Government or any Lebanese citizen or representative to go to Madrid. We went to Madrid as an expression of solidarity with the Arab brothers and so that peace can be just and comprehensive. So far, Lebanon has achieved no progress in this regard; we are still waiting. But be assured that the domestic Lebanese front, which surprised the world during the recent Israeli aggression, is our weapon and will remain our weapon. We will continue to display solidarity at all levels, from Bkirki to every other religious, civil, or governmental centers. This is our position.

Lebanon: Mubarak Said To Decline Inviting Lebanon to Damascus Summit

NC0806144496 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 1330 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Our correspondent in London has learned that Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz had asked Egyptian President Husni Mubarak to invite Lebanon to participate in the Damascus Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi summit, because the discussions are of primary concern to Lebanon. President Mubarak, however, apologized because he did not want to get involved in this matter because of certain personal relations among the leaders participating in the conference. President Mubarak did not want to divert public attention from Arab interests prior to or during the summit.

Lebanon: Al-Hariri Welcomes Cairo Summit, Says Lebanon To Attend

NC0806194596 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1900 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri welcomed the invitation extended by the Damascus tripartite summit to hold an Arab summit. In a statement to REUTER, he said: We welcome this summit and we will attend it. He described the summit as a positive step. He said that it will be an Arab meeting that will muster strength and bolster the Arab stance, particularly Lebanon's.

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Syria: Iranian Foreign Minister Arrives With Message for al-Asad

JN0906150696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1415 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati arrived in Damascus this afternoon on a visit to Syria.

He was received at Damascus International Airport by Nasir Qaddur, minister of state for foreign affairs, some senior Foreign Ministry Officials, the Iranian ambassador in Damascus, and the Iranian Embassy staff.

In a statement to a SYRIAN ARAB NEWS AGENCY, SANA, correspondent, Dr. Velayati said: I am carrying a message from Iranian President 'Ali Hashemi-Rafsanjani to President Hafiz al-Asad.

Syria: Further on Iranian Foreign Minister's Arrival Statement

JN0906171996 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1515 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati arrived in Damascus this afternoon on a visit to Syria.

He was received at Damascus International Airport by Nasir Qaddur, minister of state for foreign affairs, some senior Foreign Ministry Officials, the Iranian ambassador in Damascus, and the Iranian Embassy staff.

In a statement to a SYRIAN ARAB NEWS AGENCY, SANA, correspondent, Dr. Velayati said that he is carrying a message to President Hafiz al-Asad from Iranian President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani. He added that his talks with Syrian officials will deal with bilateral relations and developments in the region.

Dr. Velayati said that the strong relations between Syria and Iran prompt them to hold consultations and exchange views on issues of interest to the Middle East.

Syria: Al-Asad Receives Iranian Foreign Minister

JN0906172196 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1648 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 9 Jun (SANA)—President Hafiz al-Asad received Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati and the delegation accompanying him at 1845 today. Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and Iranian Ambassador in Damascus Shaykh Mohammad Hasan Akhtari-Forughi attended the meeting.

Syria: Velayati Hails 'Excellent' Syrian-Iranian Ties

LD0906194896 Tehran IRNA in English 1757 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damascus, June 9, IRNA — Iran's Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati described Tehran-Damascus relations as "excellent" here today. Velayati, who arrived here on Sunday [9 June] at the head of a delegation on a two-day visit, with a message for President Hafiz al-Asad from his Iranian counterpart Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, said the present regional developments warrant closer cooperation between the two countries' political officials.

Deputy Iranian Foreign minister for Mideast-African affairs, Hoseyn Sheykholeslam and other Foreign Ministry officials are accompanying the Iranian foreign minister.

The last time that Velayati was in Damascus was in April, when he held intensive talks with Syrian, Lebanese, French and Russian foreign ministers to halt Israel's U.S.-blessed state terrorism against the defenceless people of south Lebanon.

Syria: Velayati Gives al-Asad Message From Rafsanjani

LD0906195696 Tehran IRNA in English 1936 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damascus, June 9, IRNA — Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati presented Syrian president a message from Iranian President Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani here today. At the meeting which was attended by Syrian Minister of Foreign Affairs Faruq al-Shar', Iran's Deputy Foreign minister for Mideast-African Affairs Hoseyn Sheykholeslam and Iranian ambassador to Damascus Hojjat ol-Eslam Hasan Akhtari, the two sides reviewed the latest regional latest developments.

Velayati who arrived here at the head of a ranking foreign ministry delegation on a 2-day official visit early on Sunday [9 June], termed Tehran-Damascus ties "excellent" in his talk with reporters.

Syria: Velayati—Iran Ready To Mediate in Bahrain Crisis

LD0906205496 Tehran IRNA in English 2029 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damascus, June 9, IRNA — Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati said here on Sunday [9 June] that the current crisis between the people and the government of Bahrain could be solved only by taking into account the demands of the masses.

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Velayati, who is here on an official visit with a message from President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani for Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, repeated Iran's readiness to mediate between the people and government of Bahrain.

Last week also, in his interview with the AL-HAYAH Arabic magazine Velayati had offered Iran's good offices to Bahrain to help mediate an end to the crisis which is plaguing the archipelago state in the Persian Gulf.

The Bahraini opposition has rejected the government's accusations that the unrest is foreign inspired, and said that the authorities refusal to meet the demands of the majority for greater rights and representation has only worsened the situation.

"Other countries should not interfere in Bahrain's internal affairs," Velayati told reporters in the Syrian capital, adding "the Islamic Republic of Iran will mediate provided the two sides (government and opposition) agree." He again refuted the allegations of Iranian interference in the crisis in Bahrain.

Syria: Al-Asad, Iran's Velayati Discuss 'Issues of Mutual Concern'

JN1006060896 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0415 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati and his delegation at the People's Palace yesterday evening. Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and Iranian Ambassador in Damascus Shaykh Mohammad Hasan Akhtari-Forughi attended the meeting.

Dr. Velayati conveyed greetings to the president from Iranian President Hashemi-Rafsanjani. President al-Asad asked Velayati to convey his greetings and wishes to the Iranian president.

The participants in the meeting discussed regional developments and issues of mutual concern.

Syria: Iran's Velayati Concludes Damascus Visit, Departs

JN1006084496 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0815 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati and his delegation left Damascus this morning at the end of their visit to Syria.

He was seen off at Damascus International Airport by Nasir Qaddur, minister of state for foreign affairs; ranking Foreign Ministry officials; the Iranian ambassador in Damascus; and embassy staff.

Syria: Qatar's Hamad Arrives, Meets al-Asad, Comments on Peace

JN0906152396 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1115 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received Qatari Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Jabr Al Thani and his delegation. Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and the Qatari charge d'affaires in Damascus attended.

Shaykh Hamad arrived in Damascus today on a visit to Syria. He was received at Damascus International Airport by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', a number of senior Foreign Ministry officials, and the Qatari charge d'affaires in Damascus and Embassy staff.

In a statement to the SYRIAN ARAB NEWS AGENCY, SANA, Shaykh Hamad expressed his happiness for visiting in Syria. He said: I will convey an oral message to President Hafiz al-Asad from His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, the amir of the state of Qatar, dealing with strengthening bilateral relations and the region's developments.

Answering a question on Arab solidarity at this stage, Shaykh Hamad said: We are happy with the results of the Syrian-Egyptian-Saudi summit in Damascus and are pleased with the invitation His Highness Amir Hamad received from Egyptian President Husni Mubarak to attend the Arab summit. He said: Signals from the elected Israeli Government [as heard] are not encouraging. We in Qatar frankly said that if any change or stalling in the peace process occurs, we will change our stands, because our joining the peace process was done collectively with Arab states.

Answering a question on the Israeli Likud leaders' statements on their intention not to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories or respect signed agreements, Shaykh Hamad said: Principles were established at the Madrid conference which are different from what they say. An understanding was reached and talks were held which were different from what they say. We are awaiting their official assumption of power. If we feel this, [as heard] then an Arab stand must be adopted, because joining the peace process was prompted by the desire to establish a comprehensive peace on all tracks and to solve all problems related to the Arab territories occupied in 1967. If we do not attain this, then we will not attain peace.

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Syria: Further on al-Asad Meeting With Qatari Foreign Minister

JN0906171596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1515 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received Qatari Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Jabr Al Thani and the delegation accompanying him at the People's Palace at 1330 today. The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and the Qatari charge d'affaires in Damascus.

The Qatari minister conveyed to the president a message from Qatari Amir Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani. President al-Asad asked him to convey a reply message. Talks dealt with the situation in the Arab arena.

Syria: Qatari Foreign Minister Departs After Brief Visit

JN0906152796 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1415 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Qatari Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Jabr Al Thani left Damascus this evening after a brief visit to Syria.

He was seen off at Damascus International Airport by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', senior Foreign Ministry officials, the Qatari charge d'affaires in Damascus, and the Qatari Embassy staff. [passage omitted]

Syria: 3-Way Summit Called 'Cornerstone' of Arab Efforts

JN0706143396 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1141 GMT 7 Jun 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: Damascus will host with all pan-Arab zeal the three-way Syrian-Saudi-Egyptian summit today. The summit is part of the active diplomacy and intensive meetings to rectify the course of inter-Arab relations and use the best means to promote joint Arab action and take practical steps to enhance active Arab solidarity to face the changes and dangers that threaten the Arab nation's interests and future.

In light of all developments and dangers, it was natural for Syria, led by President Hafiz al-Asad, to move quickly and with a high sense of pan-Arab responsibility to grasp all the new developments on the political and military scene in the region. Israel imposed the major features of these developments, and it is about to impose more such features in accordance with the extremism that is in full swing after the success of Binyamin Netanyahu in the Israeli premiership elections. This will affect the region and the peace process.

It was also natural to accelerate the pace of consultations and discussions with Arab brothers and active elements in the Arab scene. Hence the Latakia summit, which joined President Hafiz al-Asad and Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi, followed by the bilateral summit in Cairo between Presidents Hafiz al-Asad and Husni Mubarak. The Cairo summit was the beginning of a pan-Arab effort to prepare for the three-way summit in Damascus today. This emphasizes the awareness of the dangers inherent in the current stage. There should be a serious attempt to give Arab solidarity a pan-Arab concept that will fortify the Arab arena and deny the nation's enemies the chance to undermine the Arab position and consecrate the state of division and fragmentation that these enemies have used as a loophole to achieve their goals and implement their schemes of regional domination.

It has become necessary for all the masses of the nation and those who sincerely care about the nation's interests to embark on a serious effort to formulate a solid position based on a clear vision. A pan-Arab strategy should be worked out in order to translate the unified Arab efforts that embody the unified Arab concerns and objectives. This should be the proper response to the challenges. The Arabs should take the initiative and not be satisfied with mere reactions. They should be influential and have the will to do so, especially when the issue pertains to their existence in the present and future.

Taking the initiative is essential. The horizons of the region are clouded with Israeli extremism, which not only threatens the peace process, but also augurs far more serious threats to security and peace in the region and the world. This concerns all Arabs, who should prepare for all possibilities as soon as possible and with a full sense of pan-Arab responsibility, because the region is now under a Netanyahu government. The statements, positions, and policies that have emerged so far do not leave room for optimism or reassure us about the upcoming stage. A unified Arab position should be taken toward the various pan-Arab causes, foremost of which are the questions of land, rights, and peace — which is in the interest of all in the region and the world. Israel should respond favorably to the requirements of peace if it really wants peace. Israel should also work in accordance with the international legitimacy and the world consensus.

No doubt, the three-way Syrian-Saudi-Egyptian summit in Damascus today is the cornerstone for any comprehensive Arab effort based on a strategy that seeks to

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entrench the pan-Arab position ahead of any possibilities. The summit seeks to enable the Arabs to take the initiative at this serious juncture and critical situation, with all its repercussions for the peace process and the regional situation. Arab solidarity and joint Arab action are a pan-Arab requirement and are necessitated by the fact that the Arab lands, rights, and future are threatened. It is necessary to unite ranks and position, rectify the vision, and work out a comprehensive strategy that will enable the Arab nation to enter the 21st century in a manner that befits its role among the nations and people of the world.

Syria: 'Special Importance' of Mubarak-al-Asad Cairo Summit Viewed

JN0706145796 Damascus SYRIA TIMES in English 4 Jun 96 pp 1, 4

[Editorial by Walid Shihadah in Cairo: "Cairo Summit"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] By all counts the new Syria-Egypt summit held yesterday in Cairo is of special importance. Syria-Egyptian consultations at the highest level always touch upon issues of interest to the Arab nation as a whole. What interests the nation is the major concern of Damascus and Cairo, and the meeting of these two capitals is the source of strategic strength to all Arabs.

The new developments in the region, particularly the results of the Israeli elections, the defeat of Shimon Peres and the victory of the Likud Party chief Binyamin Netanyahu, the current Arab conditions, with the rift dividing the Arabs which is a result of certain circumstances and the need to revive Arab solidarity were centre points in the discussions between President al-Asad and his Egyptian host President Mubarak. The talks were described by the leaders themselves as very good. Egypt's Foreign Minister Mr. 'Amr Musa in a special interview with the SYRIA TIMES described the meeting, the bilateral relations and coordination between the two countries as vital and of exceptional importance.

The peace process which is the pre-occupation of all had its wide space of discussion. But there was noting new. However, the principles of the peace process were emphasized again. President Mubarak made this clear when he said, "Netanyahu's speech Sunday [2 June] "did not inspire optimism." [quotation marks as published] He added: "If they (the Israelis) are ready for a real, just and comprehensive peace based on the principles of Madrid conference and the relevant UN resolutions 242 and 338, we would not differ." Nevertheless, President al-Asad affirmed that the peace process does not seem to be going in the right direction. President al-Asad, with his usual confirmation of Arab interest as a whole, said there are changes in substantive issues in the region, therefore we have to exert intensified efforts, and we have to exchange views because the cause of anyone of us is the cause of us all. In the course of his answer to a question about reviving Arab solidarity, President al-Asad affirmed "Syria is always with Arab get-together, because this is the only path which if we follow leads us to what is guaranteed."

In fact Syria has always called for Arab solidarity and for Arab coordination. President al-Asad is a strong advocate of this. He strongly believes that unity is the source of Arab strength. He did not like the defection from coordination of certain Arab parties because Israel wants to single out the Arab countries and impose its conditions and achieve the peace which it wants away from the principles agreed when the Madrid conference convened, eventually leading to partial deals that do not guarantee Arab rights. Therefore, President al-Asad talks and calls for Arab solidarity.

The importance of this Cairo summit stems from the fact that Syria-Egypt coordination is in the interest of all Arabs.

Syria: Press Highlights Importance of Damascus Summit

JN0806094496 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0445 GMT 8 Jun 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "The Summit of Arab Audacity," the newspaper AL-BA'TH asserts that the special and unique importance of the tripartite Damascus summit is its timeliness in dotting the I's and crossing the T's. Its aim is to remedy the Arab state of affairs so that Arabs can take the initiative in acting upon and influencing events in the region before it is too late and before almost ineradicable dictates are forced on the region.

AL-BA'TH adds: The circumstances require Arab audacity and proof that the Arabs are for true peace—that they are all staunch advocates of true peace but are all opposed to capitulation, stupor, and abandonment of rights. The Damascus summit, which brought together three Arab states who wield influence in the Arab and Islamic world, will make its stand clear today. It will match its words with deeds to crystallize a joint Arab strategy and revive the spirit of the Alexandria summit. Such a strategy must produce a vigorous Arab solidarity and energize Arab institutions. Likewise, it must produce a joint Arab stand so that we can regain the occupied territories, restore usurped rights, and curb the rush toward the Israeli trap.

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Concluding, AL-BA'TH says: It is the summit of Arab audacity. It is the first glimmer of hope in this heavily dark Arab environment. All Arabs are called upon to come together and show solidarity. History will not be lenient with those who are negligent and fail to perform their duties toward their peoples and their nation's dignity.

In a commentary entitled "The Summit of Sharpening Resolve," the newspaper AL-THAWRAH says that the eyes of all Arabs are now fixed on the Damascus summit, given the tough circumstances experienced by the nation. The paper adds: The Arabs hope that the resolutions of this summit will live up to the scope of the challenges facing the nation as a result of Israeli intransigence, which has been nurtured and fostered by the Likud election victory and its brazen refusal to subscribe to the bases of the peace process.

Concluding, AL-THAWRAH says: Arabs must sharpen their resolve. They must unleash their potential and pool their resources and capabilities in the course of their efforts to face up to the fateful challenge represented by the growing Israeli intransigence, which is opposed to the requirements and components of just and comprehensive peace. Leader al-Asad has recently urged the Arabs to keep in touch, mobilize their potential, and tackle their problems in a way that helps them meet the needs of their people and nation.

In another commentary entitled "Solidarity and Joint Stand," the newspaper AL-THAWRAH says: The Damascus summiteers believe that the current challenges dictate a different method of Arab action, especially since the Israeli policy would nullify the Madrid conference and demolish the peace process, not to mention the fact that it reflects a rebellion against the relevant international legitimacy resolutions.

AL-THAWRAH adds: The overall developments and the outcome of the fruitless peace negotiations have shown the soundness of the Syrian position, which is opposed to separate deals that allow Israel to achieve its goals to the Arab nation's detriment, not to mention the fact that they perpetuate occupation.

AL-THAWRAH concludes by saying: Damascus, which is hosting the summit, is hopeful and optimistic that there will be a genuine Arab awakening that will lead to Arab solidarity and pool Arab resources in order to achieve the desired pan-Arab renaissance. His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad said recently that we are capable of addressing our basic issues.

The TISHRIN editorial today underlines the importance of the Damascus summit in reuniting Arabs and achieving effective Arab solidarity. The paper says that national duty requires all Arabs to be vigilant and alert, to pool their efforts and capabilities, and to marshal their energy to come up with a unified Arab stand that can confront the strategy that is hostile to peace and wants to fragment Arabs and control their lands. Arabs ought to confront all settlement projects that bring Jewish immigrants to occupied Palestine.

TISHRIN points out that no Arab will escape from the dangers to which Israel and its extremist religious parties are trying to expose the region. These dangers jeopardize the entire Arab presence and the destiny of the Arab nation. Israel wants to fragment the Arab nation so that it can impose its hegemony on our resources, wealth, and desires, and so that it can annex more of our land.

TISHRIN says: If this goes on, not only will the peace process be endangered and undermined; in addition, the entire region will be facing serious challenges and [word indistinct] tests, with disastrous consequences if the Arabs do not adopt a unified pan-Arab strategy and stance before it is too late to dissuade Israel from its hostile, racist, and expansionist goals.

The paper adds: The Damascus summit, which is a major historic step to reunite Arabs and achieve an effective level of Arab solidarity, is the real guarantee for confronting the situation proceeding from adherence to Arab rights as well as to the principles of realizing just, comprehensive, and honorable peace.

Based on the above, consultations, cooperation, and coordination among the Arabs is the cornerstone for finding an actual, serious, and strong remedy to the Arab situation and for preventing any further deterioration. This requires that the growing normalization of relations between some Arab states and Israel, which is giving nothing in return, be suspended. This also requires that the Israeli penetrations of the Arab arena be stopped.

TISHRIN asserts that the results of the Damascus summit will have an extremely significant impact on bolstering Arab solidarity, activating the Arab role, and finding a unified pan-Arab position that protects the peace process, fulfills the will of international legitimacy, and maintains the principles of a just and comprehensive peace in the region on the basis of implementing Resolutions 242, 338, and 425.

Concluding, TISHRIN says that Syria, who views the confrontation of the challenges as a top priority, will always remain faithful to its pledge to resolve all Arab issues in a way that meets the needs of our peoples and nation and reinforces the unity and solidarity of the Arab ranks.

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Syria: Role of Damascus Summit in Building Arab Unity Viewed

JN0806153096 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 8 Jun 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] In light of accelerating regional developments, the rise of the extremist forces in Israel and the ideas and programs these forces are proposing do not call for optimism. So there is every need for an effective Arab move to assess the course of events, look into developments, and clear the way for a unified pan-Arab position in order to protect Arab land and rights and to build a pan-Arab future in accordance with the will of the pan-Arab masses.

Out of this pan-Arab concern, a Syrian-Egyptian-Saudi summit is being held in Damascus to correct the Arab situation, achieve the highest degree of solidarity, and counter existing and expected dangers and challenges.

The meeting of President Hafiz al-Asad, President Husni Mubarak, and Prince 'Abdallah is a source of hope for the Arab masses, who see it as an important vehicle for holding consultations, exchanging views, and considering developments in the pan-Arab arena in order to establish a common ground for a realistic action, restore balance in the joint Arab action, clear the Arab atmosphere, place pan-Arab interests above other considerations, confidently discuss all the pan-Arab options, and develop a comprehensive strategy.

Every honorable Arab knows that the Arab nation is facing a critical and sensitive situation, not only because of the dangers posed by Israel's strength and its stockpiled destructive war machine, but also because of the Arabs' weakness and fragmentation and the absence of coordination among them.

Anybody who contemplates the developments and the nature of these dangers will find that Israel is carrying out its strategy by maintaining the occupation, encroaching on pan-Arab rights, and imposing hegemony over the entire region by deceiving and blackmailing the Arabs in several ways, including incomplete accords and establishing normal trade and diplomatic relations, in violation of Arab unity.

In light of this, it is historically necessary for the Arabs to promote the pan-Arab position, prefer pan-Arab interests to any other consideration, and act honestly to rebuild Arab solidarity. The region is being exposed to grave dangers, and the peace process seems to be at the mercy of Israeli extremism, which does not call for optimism.

This makes the tripartite Damascus summit, which has formulated the basis for a comprehensive future Arab move, a factor that will help unite the Arab position against the dangers that threaten the Arab nation and the outcome of the peace process. This historic summit in Damascus will build optimism for a pan-Arab awakening. The summit participants believe that these challenges call for Arab solidarity, mobilizing Arab energy, and closing Arab ranks in order to build the nation's future out of belief in its unity, its capabilities, its future, and its one fate.

Syria: Damascus Summit Called 'Step in the Right Direction'

JN0806160696 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0830 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 8 Jun (SANA)—The newspaper AL-BA'TH warns against the dangers on the horizon as a result of the circumstances that have started to place negative pressure toward changing the working rules to achieve peace. The paper points out that these dangers require that we hold consultations and conduct a common assessment of the events in order to confront future challenges.

In today's editorial by Chief Editor Dr. Turki Saqr, the paper says: The Arab response to the Damascus call for cooperation, solidarity, and coordination is a step in the right direction to form an Arab nucleus that will serve as the basis of a unified Arab stand to assume our national responsibilities amid these difficult circumstances and the serious turning points that lie ahead for the Arab nation.

The paper continues: Syria has long believed that the Israeli rulers are not faithful to the peace process. These assessments have proved true throughout all phases of the peace talks. The results of the Israeli elections and the victory of Netanyahu — the leader of the right wing, extremism, and hostility and an upholder of racism, malice, and superiority — are more proof that the coming stage will be negative and far removed from security and stability. They also prove that the coming stage will not be in the interest of achieving a just and comprehensive peace, but to achieve new Israeli gains by threatening others and terrorizing the region.

AL-BA'TH says: On several occasions after his election — and despite the Clinton Administration's plea to ease his fanaticism and extremist ideas a little in order to gain time — Netanyahu reiterated the following: No recognition of an independent Palestinian state; no talk whatsoever about Jerusalem, any discussions on the matter are totally out of the question; no withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon; no redeployment,

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even in Hebron; disregard for the principles of the U.S. initiative; and total disregard for all UN resolutions. It is as if he has appointed himself the sole leader of the entire world.

The paper asks: What lies ahead for the Arabs after all this? Is there a more serious danger closing in on all Arabs, without exception? Is there a better moment of truth than the present for all Arabs to be alert and vigilant?

For its part, the newspaper AL-THAWRAH says that the Damascus summit believes that the Israeli challenges are forcing the Arabs to adopt a certain kind of attitude that differs from the previous one. This is because Israel has adopted the policy of canceling the Madrid conference, burying the peace process, and rebelling against the international legitimacy resolutions.

In its comment today, the paper wonders: How can we negotiate with someone who does not want to withdraw from the Syrian Golan and the occupied Arab lands and who refuses to exchange land for peace? Surely, no one expects peace to prevail in the region as long as Israel insists on adhering to the policy of expansion, racism, war, and destruction in order to solve its problems at the expense of all the Arab states, without exception?

Concluding, AL-THAWRAH notes that the overall developments and the outcome of the fruitless peace negotiations have proved the soundness of the Syrian position, which rejects the separate deals that serve all the Israeli goals at the expense of the Arab nation and perpetuates occupation.

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Kabul Weekly Hails Iran's Mediation Efforts

LD0906214696 Tehran IRNA in English 2124 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, June 9, IRNA — 'PAYAM-E SHAHID' (Voice of the Martyr), a Kabul-based weekly, here on Sunday [9 June] referring to Iran's mediation role to help build confidence among the various Afghan factions and restore peace to the country, wrote that the Afghan government and people appreciate the endeavours of the Iranian officials.

PAYAM-E SHAHID, the organ of the Harakat-e Eslami [Islamic Movement] led by Ayatollah Mohammad Asef Mohseni, called as effective the peace efforts of Iranian officials, and warned of imperialist plots to prolong the Afghan crisis at this sensitive juncture.

It pointed that Iran, because of its "good-neighbourly and brotherly attitude towards the Afghan people," has succeeded in winning the confidence of the Afghan government and people, while the so-called peace efforts of other countries have floundered.

The weekly singled out for praise the diplomatic shuttle of Deputy Iranian Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Affairs 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi who earlier this week again visited Kabul, Mazar-e Sharif, Bamian and Jalalabad, to build bridges among the different groups.

Afghanistan: Arab 'Fundamentalists' Flock to Afghan Mountain Hideaways

MM1006082496 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 7 Jun 96 pp 1,4

[Report by Amir Taheri in London: "'Arab Afghans' Use 'Imarat' in Three Mountain Provinces as Hiding Places"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Large numbers of fundamentalists, forced to leave Sudan or fleeing from Algeria, are flocking to Afghanistan's remote areas, where these "Arab Afghans" can set up semi-autonomous "imarat" [plural of imarah, district headed by an amir], and pose a challenge to the authority of the Afghan Government in Kabul. These "imarat" are also used as training centers, hiding places, logistics coordination units, and command and communication centers between extremist fundamentalists active in Egypt, Algeria, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, and some other Arab states.

These "Afghan Arabs" are to be found mainly in the three Afghan provinces of Konar, Vakhan, and Paktia. They enjoy the support of similiar fundamentalist groups, namely the al-Batan tribal chiefs, and other major traffickers who provide them with contact lines in the outside world via many Pakistani cities. After his departure from Sudan, Usamah Bin-Ladin has been living in one of these hiding places.

Ahmad Wali Mas'ud, the Afghan Government spokesman in Kabul, said: "We know the locations of these groups, but we are not in a position to expel their members or arrest them." Mas'ud added that Afghan Arabs are ensconced in fortified villages previously loyal to "Hezb-e Eslami." They continue to maintain Pakistan's approval and support, after the party led by Golboddin Hekmatyar broke up over the past two years, and lost control of those areas.

The fortifications used by the "Afghan Arabs" include power generators, satellite telephone and television equipment, workshops for printing secret bulletins, and huge quantities of modern weapons supplied by the United States during the eighties. Western, Afghan, Pakistani, and Algerian intelligence sources confirmed that many of these extremists, who are nationals of several states, recently crossed the Pakistani borders into Afghanistan.

The intelligence sources estimate Arab citizens in these "Imarat" to number several thousand, many of them having lived in Pakistan and Afghanistan since the eighties, when they married women in those areas and started families there.

Some of the extremist [groups] — who are active in other states — take refuge in these "imarat" whenever their members find themselves in danger, and remain there until the situation calms down, after which they all return to their initial "theater of operations," under a new identity. According to Algerian sources, some 300 extremists arrived in Afghanistan over the last few weeks via Libya, Sudan, or Pakistan.

India

India: Rao Says To Prepare for Polls in '7 Months to a Year'

BK0806160996 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 8 Jun 96 p 1

[Unattributed Report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Former Prime Minister and Congress president P V Narasimha Rao has told senior party leaders that the United Front [UF] Government was likely to be a short-lived affair and that the party should be prepared for a general election within "seven months to a year."

Mr Rao's remarks assume significance as till now he has maintained a characteristic silence over the

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UF Government's formation and functioning. However, he is said to have shared some thoughts with party colleagues who met him recently.

Among those who Mr Rao has interacted with are Madhya Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Subhas Yadav, some senior Rajya Sabha MPs and AICC [All India Congress Committee] office-bearers like Janardhan Poojary and Devendra Dwivedi. The former Prime Minister has also met AICC office-bearers to discuss party organisation and reactions to the UF common minimum programme.

Mr Rao is understood to have observed that there were several "uncertainties" plaguing the UF; Government which is critically dependent on the outside support or the Congress and comprises of different regional groupings. He is reported to have stated that there were "limits" to federalism and that the "strong Centre" theory was not obsolete.

Party sources recall that the Congress president had till now adopted a "hands off" position on the UF ministry formation, not even letting slip a stray comment. However, Mr Rao's gloomy predictions on the longevity of the Gowda regime have set off ripples within the Congress as the party has officially welcomed the UF's common minimum programme.

In some quarters in the Congress, the move has been interpreted as being aimed at derailing the demands that the Congress join the United Front coalition. By stating that the party may have to prepare for polls at a very short notice, Mr Rao hopes to get partymen focussed on electoral preparedness.

The Congress president's perception seems to fly in the face of conventional wisdom among MPs who feel that no party was in a position to face the uncertainty and expense of an election. The fragile nature of the Deve Gowda Government is evident, but fear of polls would prevent a showdown, it is felt.

In fact, Mr Rao's moves seem to reflect the leadership's concern over a growing opinion within the Congress which would like to participate in the UF regime. Several MPs feel that the UF Government's performance in the forthcoming session of Parliament should be watched closely. If the Government emerges unscathed, the demand for power-sharing would escalate.

Also, Mr Rao's opponents in the Congress seem to be waiting for an opportunity to join the coalition. Former Chief Minister Sharad Pawar and former Minister Rajesh Pilot feel that they can increase their clout by becoming ministers. They understand that Mr Rao, having been Prime Minister, cannot join the Gowda Cabinet.

The Congress joining the Government is clearly not in Mr Rao's scheme of things as that would end his role as the master puppeteer running the UF Ministry. At another level Mr Rao has initiated the process of organisational elections which have been slated to culminate by December 31, 1996, in the election of the party president. Here, the leader has moved to stall his critics from raising the "one man, one post" bogey.

On the issue of the UF Government, Mr Rao's aides have underlined the areas where the coalition is expected to run into trouble. The privatisation of the telecom and the insurance sectors are the decisions that the UF constituents have stoutly opposed.

The official camp in the Congress also claims that the "real" controversies would begin once the Government got down to the task of decision-making, after winning the confidence vote in Lok Sabha. They state that the "Manmohan Singh" agenda would prove difficult for the UF to fulfil.

Iran

Iran: Daily—U.S. Using Bahrain as 'Political Ploy' Against Iran

LD0806132896 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 5 Jun 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Political Ploy for Distorting Facts on Islamic Republic"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Once again diversion of international public opinion and once more disinformation campaign against Iran! These are usually the means used by the United States and its satellites in the region to paint a distorted picture of the Islamic Republic.

This time the anti-Iran moves are being aired by countries with whom Iran, time and again, has expressed its sincere desire to have good neighborly and friendly relations.

Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates are fielding accusations against Iran with no evidence whatever.

Bahrain claims it has nabbed what it calls a group of terrorists, trained and armed by Iran to disturb law and order and create chaos in the emirate.

According to a report from Dubai, authorities in the UAE have arrested several people who allegedly tried to smuggle weapons and explosives from Iran into Saudi Arabia.

The fact is that during the last few years, the United States has been leaving no stone unturned to inculcate the idea that Iran, and not Israel, is the real source of danger in the Islamic Middle East.

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Through such hollow slogans, the U.S. has been trying to impose a peace arrangement which could only suit its own colonial designs and the interests of Israel. But last week's victory of the extremist Likud marred the ill design of America and serious concern was voiced in the regional countries regarding the development in Israel.

The officials of the United States wasted no time in presenting radical Binyamin Netanyahu as a prophet of peace. Obviously the U.S. needed an image of a 'bad boy' in the region in order to scare the small, but oil-rich countries in this part of the world, and thus justify its policies.

Without the American intervention the situation in Bahrain would be crystal clear. The Persian Gulf island nation of Bahrain wants nothing but its genuine rights. The people in Bahrain are facing the worst dictatorial regime, which is based on hereditary succession and is in no way accountable to the nation.

Bahrain's 60 percent Shi'a majority is deprived of its basic civil rights and no Shi'a citizen is holding any official post in the emirate.

The Bahrain uprising, by the followers of both the Sunni and Shi'a schools of Islam, has been limited to widespread demonstrations and occasional use of very simple home-made weapons for which no foreign assistance is needed.

The same observation holds true for the Saudi people who want nothing other than their basic rights: the establishment of a parliament to run the affairs of their country according to the common people's aspirations. In response to these rightful demands the regimes in Manama and Riyadh dub the freedom-fighters Islamic extremists and try to crush their movement.

Netanyahu's recent victory put the Middle East peace process in danger and that is why the United States and its allies started using a political ploy to distort facts on Iran and deceive the popular opinion in this region.

Iran: Paper Examines Dispute With Bahrain

LD0906160396 Tehran SALAM in Persian 5 Jun 96 p 12

[Commentary: "Externalization of an Internal Problem"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A senior member of the Al Khalifah government in Bahrain has said that Manama is recalling its ambassador to Tehran in protest to what he called Iranian interference in the internal affairs of that country. Rationalizing the actions of his government, he said that a large number of opponents, who had been arrested, intended to form a Muslim Shiite government there.

Several reactionary Arab leaders as well as the foreign ministers of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council who were meeting in Riyadh, also supported the baseless claim of the Al Khalifah government, although only a short while earlier the foreign minister of Oman had said that the crisis in Bahrain was an internal problem and that Iran had not interfered in the affairs of that country. Our officials have replied to these claims on a number of occasions but it seems there is a need to explain several points:

The reality is that externalisation of internal problems by reactionary government leaders is becoming epidemic in the region. For example, 'Arafat is trying to divert public opinion from the factors that caused the defeat of the Tel Aviv compromise process (such as the expansionism of the Zionist regime and the opposition of the Palestinian people to the agreement). He portrays Iran as the factor hampering the so-called peace process and militant organizations, such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad, as instruments of foreign powers, that is, Islamic Iran, to outshine the revival of the Zionist spirit of aggression (the election of Netanyahu).

At the same time, the government of Al Khalifah in Bahrain and some other reactionary governments in the region are pursuing a similar path by trying to accuse Iran of interference in the internal crisises of these countries. They try to undermine the just demands and struggles of the majority of the Bahraini people — who only seek their basic rights, such as the right to vote — to overshadow the overt and covert treacheries of the reactionary countries of the region in supporting the political and economical presence of the Zionists in the region.

Furthermore, the Al Khalifah government is trying to portray events in Bahrain as a shiite effort to bring down a sunni government and to create a shiite government. This [claim] is intended to create concern among the people of the region about the just struggles of the Bahraini people against the traditional and reactionary structures of their government. There is no doubt that every unbiased observer will give the right of political participation in the affairs of the country to the shiite people of Bahrain — who make up 80 percent of the 500,000 people of the country and are thus the majority but are excluded from participation in social affairs.

But it is important to note that the struggles of the people against the government of Al Khalifah are not limited to the shiite people but include followers of other Islamic schools and even secularist and nationalists. Therefore the deceit of the Al-Khalifah government and

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its duplicity to portray itself as a "sunni government" against the shiite people is no longer effective.

It would be better if the government of Al Khalifah stopped the externalisation of its internal problems and if it dealt with the main causes of the crisis in its country, such as the corrupt presence of Western tourists, particularly the Americans; the increasing unemployment; the deprivation of the people from their basic rights, such as the right to vote; the ban on contacts with foreigners; and the ban on free travel abroad.

The support expressed by some reactionary regional governments for the government of Al Khalifah, the use of troops from some of these governments to suppress the people of Bahrain, and the presence of the headquarters of the U.S. Fifth Fleet in Manama is not going to solve any problems either.

Indeed, the instrument of suppression has not helped these countries to free themselves from internal crisis and because the illegitimate U.S. military presence in Arab capitals has not increased their stability.

Furthermore, the claims of the government in Bahrain have not attracted the attention of its Western friends, a point that proves if there was any maneuvering room for such claims, the West would not have failed to extend them.

It is best if the Al Khalifah avoided externalization of its problems and instead sought to find proper solutions and ways of reaching an understanding with the people of Bahrain. The claims by the rulers of Bahrain are only good for the crisis-ridden shaykhs such as themselves.

Iran: Velayati on Bahrain, Hizballah, Gulf Ties

MM0706134996 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 7 Jun 96 p 4

[Interview with Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati by Ghassan Bin-Jiddu in Tehran; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Bin-Jiddu] Tehran denied any link with the Bahrain incidents. But the Bahraini Government stresses that it has uncovered an organization called "Hezbollah" and named some of its leaders, saying that they received military training in the Iranian city of Qom and in some of Hezbollah's camps in Lebanon. So it is not just accusations...there are proofs.

[Velayati] We are not the only people saying that what is happening in Bahrain is purely a domestic problem. Sultan Qabus [of Oman] himself said the same a few days ago, and so did a number of Arab and Western officials. We told the government and the opposition in Bahrain that it is better to solve any problem through peaceful dialogue, and our opinion is still the same. As for the accusations to which you refer, no one in the world has taken them seriously. At any rate, we categorically deny these accusations and stress that we have nothing at all to do with what is happening in Bahrain. In fact we in Iran, Bahrain's neighbor, have no desire to interfere in Bahrain's internal affairs, nor do we want to be the cause of any tension or any crisis in the region. Because that would harm everyone. In this context, I say that we are willing to mediate between the government and the opposition to secure a solution acceptable to the two sides. Because we believe that the sound way to solve domestic problems in Bahrain is to hold talks between the government and the opposition with a view to finding suitable solutions to these problems.

[Bin-Jiddu] You said that the Bahraini Government's accusations against Iran of involvement in the incidents there have not convinced anyone. But the Gulf Cooperation Council states are sympathizing with Bahrain and stressed this sympathy in the statement issued recently by the Gulf ministerial council.

[Velayati] Statements of that kind are not new to us. But our real relations with some of the Gulf states are completely different from what is said in statements. Visits are exchanged between us and the officials of some Gulf states. We view positively our relations with the Sultanate of Oman, Qatar, and Kuwait, and we consider them very good. People tend to differentiate between the true status of relations and what is said in statements. Nevertheless, I say that we believe that a major part of the media or political tension has something to do with U.S. influence. U.S. officials themselves are saying that they want to isolate Iran, and they are not denying that they are putting pressure on their friends everywhere to sabotage their relations with Iran. Furthermore, the United States wants an excuse and a justification for its military presence in the region.

Nevertheless, we believe that our relations with the Gulf states are good. Perhaps the participation of high-level delegations from Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates [UAE], Oman, and Qatar in the inauguration of the new silk road (Mashhahd-Sarakhs-Tedzhen) was a positive indication of the status of our relations with these states.

[Bin-Jiddu] But there are problems between Iran and the UAE concerning the dispute over the islands [Tunb al-Kubra, Tunb al-Sughra, and Abu Musa]. The question is: Why is Tehran refusing to refer the dispute to international arbitration to put an end to this problem?

[Velayati] We do not believe that direct talks have exhausted their possibilities. In fact we have not yet tested their effectiveness and benefits properly. One

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meeting was held at foreign minister level, and two at experts level. We believe that the misunderstanding can be resolved on the basis of the 1971 agreement. We feel that UAE President Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan has the willingness to cooperate calmly with us. Shaykh Zayid sent a message to President Hashemi-Rafsanjani in 1992, and we believe that the content of this message is a basis for talks. Shaykh Zayid also sent a written message to President Rafsanjani a few days ago (last Sunday). The UAE ambassador in Tehran handed the message to me. Shaykh Zayid addressed his Iranian opposite number calmly and positively through this message. And so did we, as President Rafsanjani has been dealing with Shaykh Zayid positively and fraternally. We believe that there is a foundation for solving the problems and ironing out any obstacle.

[Bin-Jiddu] Is it possible to know the content of Shaykh Zayid's message to his Iranian opposite number?

[Velayati] I cannot reveal its content, because that is up to the man to whom the message was addressed, namely President Rafsanjani. However, I can confirm that it was a friendly and calm message.

[Bin-Jiddu] You recently expressed the desire to improve relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

[Velayati] We have always sought to improve relations with the Kingdom. It is in the interests of the two countries to be bound by good relations. For our part, we have no problem in taking some steps in this direction. Iran and Saudi Arabia are two large neighboring and Muslim countries in a very sensitive part of the world, and the strategic stage prompts that our bilateral relations be based on friendship and fraternity and that there be practical cooperation between us.

[Bin-Jiddu] You always focus on the security issue in the Gulf region. What is your concept of regional security and consequently Iran's role and that of the Arab Gulf states?

[Velayati] We believe that we and the states in question have one common destiny and we must coexist. That can only be done through cooperation. To guarantee security in the region, there has to be cooperation between us.

[Bin-Jiddu] To what extent are you ready to cooperate for the sake of guaranteeing security?

[Velayati] We are ready for any kind of cooperation with the Persian Gulf states and to any level, even to the point of concluding a nonaggression treaty.

[Bin-Jiddu] Political and media circles in Tehran believe that Iranian diplomacy achieved a political success during the Israeli aggression against Lebanon. But Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi spoke of "shaky" relations between Lebanon and Iran, and the relationship between Hizballah and Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri became critical. How do you explain this?

[Velayati] Our relations with Lebanon are comprehensive, with both the state and the people. During my recent visit to Lebanon I met with the parliament speaker (Nabih Birri) and the prime minister. And so did Mohammad Kazem Khonsari (director of Middle East affairs at the Iranian Foreign Ministry). He met with all the state officials. This has always been our approach to our policy toward Lebanon. We have always had and continue to have relations with the government, official circles, and prominent public figures. This is attributable to numerous common denominators between us and Lebanon. We believe that what happened is merely a misunderstanding, because our aim was not to marginalize the state. Nor is our official policy based on excluding the Lebanese Government and official circles. This is why the Iranian housing minister went to Beirut and spoke to official circles, that is, state officials, about our participation in rebuilding part of what was destroyed by Israeli shelling. All that was done through the Lebanese Government. We also sent humanitarian aid to the government. So we see no hitch in our relations with Lebanon.

[Bin-Jiddu] Iran's link with Hizballah arouses concerns, and some people believe that Hezbollah is an Iranian pressure card in the region.

[Velayati] Hezbollah's status is too big to be a political or nonpolitical card, whether for us or for anyone else. We view Hezbollah with respect, because it is an influential element in determining Lebanon's destiny, since its role is fundamental in expelling the Israeli occupation in Lebanon, namely the occupied border strip. It is a legal party which has its deputies in parliament. It has a major role in defending Lebanon's territory and people, and indeed in contributing to achieving the Palestinians' ambitions.

[Bin-Jiddu] Would you link the continuation of your current relations with Syria to Damascus' relationship with Hezbollah?

[Velayati] Our relations with Syria are strong and staunch. And according to our information, Syria's relationship with Hezbollah is also good and staunch.

[Bin-Jiddu] In other words, would any tension in Syria's relationship with Hizballah adversely affect your relations with Damascus?

[Velayati] We believe that we, Syria, and Hizballah are in the same trench to defend Arab and Muslim interests in the region.

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[Bin-Jiddu] How do you view the effects of Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu's victory in the Israeli elections on the course of the peace process in the Middle East?

[Velayati] We see no difference between the Labor Party and the Likud bloc: They both seek to reinforce the Zionists' domination of and influence over the Islamic world. However, the Likud's victory has proved to those who have abandoned the principled Arab and Muslim stands in the hope of achieving peace with Israel that nothing is going to prompt the Zionists to abandon their ambitions and objectives, no matter how substantial the capitulation is. In other words, the Likud's return to power reflects the devastating failure of the capitulationist option.

[Bin-Jiddu] What would you think if Prime Minister Shim'on Peres became UN secretary general?

[Velayati] It would be a catastrophe for the United Nations if a person whose hands are stained with the blood of innocent Arabs and Muslims became its secretary general. Yes, it seems that the United States supports the idea of bringing this person to the United Nations, the organization which was established to achieve justice and respect for human rights in the world. How can the highest post in this organization be held by a person whose latest crime is the Qana massacre, which was condemned by all international forums and the United Nations? If that happens, it would be tantamount to administering the last rites to the international organization.

[Bin-Jiddu] What is obstructing the resumption of full diplomatic relations between Tehran and Cairo?

[Velayati] There has been bigger cooperation between us over recent years. We believe that this cooperation will have better prospects in the future. The Iranian and Egyptian peoples are two large peoples in the Islamic world. The more Egypt moves away from Israel, the closer it moves toward us.

[Bin-Jiddu] Iranian-Iraqi relations were for some years expected to witness tangible progress, but that did not happen. Why, and are there any ways of improving them?

[Velayati] True, our relations have not progressed in the manner sought, but they have never lacked progress. I believe that the signs of this progress will emerge gradually. Our relations will witness a gradual improvement.

[Bin-Jiddu] During the late French President Francois Mitterrand's funeral you shook hands with President Yasir 'Arafat. Why was that not followed by reconciliation between Tehran and 'Arafat?

[Velayati] I was standing in my place, and it was Mr. 'Arafat who left his place and came up to me. He extended his hand and shook hands and then returned to his place. The handshake meant nothing on my part. It was merely a human gesture. As for the possibility of a change in relations with him, I say briefly that Mr. 'Arafat's policy is a failure. Time has proved this. As for his relationship with us, it has always been two-faced. He is now making contacts and cooperating with the munafiqin [hypocrites] (Iranian opposition Mojahedin-e Khalq organization). This is not new. He has established relations with them since the early years of the revolution. I recall that in 1981 Hani al-Hasan (the then PLO representative in Tehran) met with the munafiqin.

[Bin-Jiddu] Was the meeting held in Tehran?

[Velayati] No, somewhere in Europe. That was after the munafiqin had committed their ugly crimes in Iran. I recall that I was representing the Majles (parliament) in an international parliamentary meeting in Cuba, where I submitted a protest to the then Palestine National Council Speaker Khalid al-Fahum. So 'Arafat's link with those people (Mojahedin-e Khalq) is not new. And the matter does not concern us much. But I want to say that 'Arafat and his group and institutions have always had a hypocritical side.

Iran: 'Expansionist Views' of Israel's Netanyahu Viewed

LD0806092996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0345 GMT 8 Jun 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the midst of the elections for the Zionist regime, the initiators of the sell-out process were interpreting Binyamin Netanyahu's extremist views as an election campaign just to win votes. They were hoping that after the elections he would become more moderate. However, they can see now that Netanyahu has not abandoned his fanatical and expansionist views.

The Zionist regime's radio, quoting Netanyahu yesterday, announced: No Palestinian state will be created, Jerusalem will become the permanent capital of the Zionist regime, and the Golan will never be returned to Syria. The leader of the Likud party has said: We are ready to talk to Syria, but we will not hand back the Golan.

Netanyahu's stance has made the compromising Arab states realize that, after giving countless concessions to the Zionist regime, they have gained nothing in return

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except recognition of Israel. When the United States was giving them promises on behalf of the defeated Zionist Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, they were hoping to secure peace with Tel Aviv by regaining a small part of their lost territories. However, Peres' successor has blatantly said that he rejects the idea of land for peace, and will only accept peace for peace.

In view of the stance adopted by the newly elected prime minister of the Zionist regime, the regional states have embarked upon a series of unprecedented efforts to readjust their own stances. In this respect, the presidents of Syria and Egypt and the Saudi crown prince began talks in Damascus yesterday.

The Arab states' endeavor to create harmony among themselves may succeed in restricting the excessive pressure of the Zionist regime, but it cannot remove that regime's expansionist policies. It is obvious that Tel Aviv, with its expansionist and aggressive nature, plans to keep the occupied territories and dominate the region's resources. It will resort to new tactics at every stage. In order to realize this objective, it seems as if the Labor and Likud parties of the Zionist regime have divided the task among themselves. We remember that during the past few years the Zionist regime kept repeating the slogan of land-for-peace. Thanks to its promise of returning the Arabs' land to them, the Zionist regime won all the concessions it was hoping to gain. Now that the time has come to respect its promises, it has handed over the power to the Likud party so as to find an excuse for refusing to honor its promises in the sell-out accords.

What we are witnessing proves that the Arab states will gain nothing by choosing the path of compromise, except strengthening of the Zionist regime and the realization of its demands.

Iran: Editorial Says Netanyahu Does Not Mean Change

LD0806132596 Tehran KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL in English 5 Jun 96 pp2,7

[Editorial by Amin Sabooni entitled: "Netanyahu Does not Mean Change"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Though Binyamin Netanyahu's narrow victory in Zionist elections last week is not expected to usher major changes in the U.S. sponsored Middle East "peace" talks, it could not have come at a more inappropriate time for America's Bill Clinton.

Just a few weeks ago, President Clinton had gone out of his way to personally invite several heads of state to the so-called "summit of peacemakers." The Sharm el-Shaykh summit in March was in fact a calculated move by the Clinton and the White House to boost the flagging popularity of former Zionist premier Shim'on Peres.

Clinton's concern was understandable even before the kings, shaykhs, and presidents' gathering in the Egyptian resort. Guerrilla attacks had shaken the robust security apparatus of the occupying power. And in a rare agreement, the world press was of the opinion that American money, support, and subsidies had once again failed in a strategic region.

Impartial observers had been warning policymakers for some time that Clinton's political ambitions had blurred his vision entirely to Tel Aviv's use of terrorism in the occupied lands, Lebanon, and beyond. It was apparent that the Clinton approach to "peace" would simply create a lot of resentment in and among European Zionists — Israel's elite and influential group of right-wingers. They wanted more for less and ultimately thrust the racist Netanyahu and his Likud bloc at the helm of power.

Zionism's political philosophy does not believe in abrupt and/or fundamental change as and when governments in Israel are elected in and out of office. Peres or Netanyahu, one individual or faction does not and cannot bring any change in the substance and direction of Israeli politics.

However, given Likud's mentality, arrogance, and racist approach, and with Netanyahu in the driver's seat, the world community may, for a short time, see a climate in Tel Aviv which will more be dominated by militant Beginism.

World public opinion is aware that the tiny Zionist state is the largest recipient of American foreign assistance. At least for home consumption, the Likud boss is compelled to make loud noises (yesterday his senior adviser said Netanyahu will never agree to a separate Palestinian state), but outside of that his reach is limited.

The Zionists in America and their highly influential friends in the White house and Capitol Hill will tell him when enough is enough and what is "in the higher interests of international Zionism." And then the language and thinking of the new ruling clique in Israel will change accordingly.

And as for the Arab policy in general, some governments seem more apologetic than others for obvious reasons. True, they have cause for concern, among other things, because almost all of them have never dealt with Netanyahu and his abusive racist rhetoric.

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But the same respected Arab governments cannot entertain doubts vis-a-vis Washington's stance. It would be appropriate to remind them that U.S. republicans' and Democrats' support to Israel continues unmatched and unmeasured since the creation of the Zionist state in 1948.

This belief becomes all the more unfortunate in light of the fact that the same American politicians love to recall that the U.S. has "vast economic and strategic interests in the Arab world". Add to this one old Zionist political maxim: Arab disunity is Zionism's secret weapon.

Iran: 'Arafat's Position as 'Baseless Pillar' Discussed

NC0706172296 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 25 May 96 p 16

[Political commentary: "The Secret of 'Arafat's Perpetuation"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Yasir 'Arafat, head of the Palestinian organization known as the PLO, claimed last Thursday [23 May] that a Palestinian group linked with the Islamic Republic of Iran intended to assassinate him.

Such allegations by the greatest traitor of Palestinian aspirations are not unprecedented. But a few points:

1. 'Arafat is gradually becoming a forgotten element. He did not have the motivation for resistance nor the capability for dialogue. In both cases he paid a toll to the Zionists. He is hated by Muslim nations and is being trampled upon by those countries' tyrants. After opening the door to the Zionists he is being pushed into the sidelines.

Tel Aviv's obstructionism in implementing the compromise plan has transformed 'Arafat into a spent force in the region. He is struggling to retain his position or even to be taken into consideration. He suppresses his Palestinian brethren but has not received any medal for his services.

His concurrence with the propaganda of Iran's enemies is another of his strategies for his perpetuation and for eliciting attention. But when the mother agencies of propaganda are forced to resort to contradictions and are being isolated, 'Arafat is seeking a bandwagon to jump on.

2. The Likud Party is not very different from the Labor Party and neither is Netanyahu very different from Peres. Both are thirsting for the blood of Muslims. But 'Arafat's fate is linked with Peres. The Zionist prime minister is struggling to stay in position on the eve of the elections while 'Arafat, who has been content to receive the bare minimum, is afraid that he will be deprived of even this meager gain with Peres' exit.

That is why he joined in Peres' anti-Iranian slogans as the Zionist regime's prime minister sought to magnify artificial foreign dangers to win domestic public opinion in favor of himself and his Labor Party.

The United States, the [rest of the] West, and the compromising Arab governments also wish to retain their regional friends. For the Palestinians, Peres is no different from Netanyahu but for 'Arafat, Peres meant his own perpetuation, even if it were with disgraceful political subservience. He even changed the PLO's charter for Peres' sake and aroused the hatred of the Palestinians but could get nothing from Tel Aviv.

But Zionist politicians, whether Labor or Likud, view 'Arafat as a tool. Peres supported him to retain his own power and Netanyahu tramples all over him to gain power. When the results of the elections emerge, the Zionists' foreign policy will be balanced on the basis of contempt for Palestinians. 'Arafat will reap nothing but dishonor.

3. Antiterrorist propaganda (!) against Iran is directed by the United States. Many weak-minded regional politicians join this wave of propaganda occasionally to gain support from Washington. 'Arafat is the weakest, and the most baseless, and, consequently, he needs the White House's support the most. The more his need the greater his groveling. The more 'Arafat looks for foreign backing the more pessimistic he becomes about domestic support. Ultimately this baseless pillar will crumble to the ground.

Iran: Tehran Views Political Crisis in Turkey, Prospects for RP

NC0706164896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Turkish 1630 GMT 6 Jun 96

[Unattributed commentary: "The Yilmaz Government's Resignation and the New Stage in the Political Crisis in Turkey"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Motherland Party [ANAP]-True Path Party [DYP] government, or ANAYOL administration, was established following initiatives taken by foreign and domestic circles to stop the pro-Islamic Welfare Party [RP] coming to power after it emerged the strongest political party in the election on 24 December 1995. Some circles believed at the time that the ANAYOL government would fail, despite its presentation as a strong and trustworthy administration. But no one could have believed it would fail so badly and resign so quickly. [passage omitted]

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Considering the developments, Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz believed the only thing for him to do was to submit his resignation to President Demirel.

Local by-elections on 2 June showed that all the political parties, except the RP, had weakened significantly. Secular circles isolated the RP in the past. But the by-elections showed that the people supported it and were ignoring the other political parties. The RP, led by Necmettin Erbakan, secured 34 percent of the vote, the DYP, headed by Tansu Ciller, 12 percent, and the Democratic Left Party [DSP], headed by Bulent Ecevit, about 9 percent.

Turkey tried hard to get a strong government after the general election on 24 December 1995 but the situation now indicates that the clock has been put back to the morning of 25 December. The only difference is that the RP has gained strength. That has made secular circles realize that the RP has strengthened fast as a result of their effort to stop it participating in a coalition government. So they are convinced the RP must be allowed to participate in the new government. But some political parties, particularly the DSP, are still worried. They argue that that must be avoided.

Some others say the RP can be weakened if it is allowed to participate in the new government. But they agree that reaching an agreement with Necmettin Erbakan on a new coalition will be more difficult now than three months ago.

Business circles are convinced that Turkey will suffer badly if a government cannot be established or if a weak government comes to power. They have hinted that they are preparing to support a new coalition that includes the RP. Nevertheless, secular circles in Turkey and elsewhere, convinced that maintaining Turkey's agreement with Israel on military cooperation and the agreement on the presence of the Hammer Force will be impossible if the RP is included in the new coalition, claim that establishing an administration with the RP's participation will be very difficult. General Cevik Bir, who signed the agreement between Turkey and Israel, yesterday said it was a natural and inseparable part of Turkey's traditional foreign policy. He hinted that the RP would be conflicting with 70 years of secular Turkish foreign policy if it opposes the agreement.

All this shows that the political crisis in Turkey will worsen. The secular front is convinced that the RP will score a victory if early elections are held. So it is considering how to save its future.

Iran: Khamene'i Message to Fifth Majles

LD0706185896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 1 Jun 96

["Text" of message by Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i, leader of Iran's Islamic revolution, to the inaugural session of the Fifth Majles in Tehran on 1 June — read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Thanks be to God for His blessings and the Lord of the Age [12th Shiite imam], may our souls be sacrificed to him, for his support. Now the Islamic Consultative Majles, which is one of the most beautiful manifestations of the people's government in the Islamic Republic of Iran, begins another four-year term. The endeavors of the recent enthusiastic and exciting elections have come to fruition and the Majles begins its work and its legal duty.

I praise God Almighty for this great blessing and success and thank the honorable people of Iran who, once again, overcame the enemy plots with their strong determination, alert minds, and breathtaking devotion. They found the path to dignity and prosperity thanks to the guidelines of the late Imam [Khomeyni].

I also take advantage of this opportunity to thank the esteemed deputies of the fourth term of the Majles for their four-year efforts toward the promotion of the country under the dear and dignified umbrella of Islam. I particularly thank the esteemed Majles speaker and members of the fourth Majles presidium for their efforts. I hope that God Almighty may properly reward each one of those brothers and sisters for their dedication and sincere services.

It is the duty of every individual in this nation, particularly those in charge of various departments and the fifth Majles deputies, to value the blessing pertaining to the setting up of the people's Majles within its legally-allotted time limit, thanks to the efforts of those in charge of the holding of elections; and they should praise God Almighty for this valuable asset, which is a source of dignity and pride for our country and revolutionary people.

This steady and ceaseless activity, which has continued during the eventful years of the revolution and amid all different problems during the last 16 years, is a sign of the country's stability, the liveliness of the revolution and the capability of the officials; and, above all, it is the sign of God Almighty's blessings for this nation and country. It is also a sign of God's support for the devotion shown by the believers, the selflessness of the

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young, the blood of the martyrs and the self-sacrificing efforts of this nation.

I beseech God Almighty to prolong this bountiful well-spring and I beg to tell you, the esteemed and elected representatives of the people in the fifth Islamic Consultative Majles, about several points which, under the current conditions of the country and global circumstances have to be pointed out and whose observance is a definite duty.

1. The first point concerns the general alignment of the Majles. That must be in line with the supreme objectives, slogans and values of Islam. Although, bearing in mind that the Majles is the quintessence of the Muslim and revolutionary nation and a product of the Islamic revolution, that point is not a new concept. The proud epithet of Islamic, contained in the name of this consultative assembly, speaks of its nature and direction. Nevertheless, under the present conditions of the country — where, thanks be to God, the construction movement is growing with acceleration and strength — paying attention to this specific point acquires a new role and importance.

It may be that one of the effects of the construction period in ruling systems based on values is that it makes some simple-minded and superficial people become negligent about the role of the faith factor and the system's fundamental principles, and inculcates this wrong belief in them that apparently the era of holy slogans and genuine values has come to an end. That bankrupt assumption, along with some financial and personal motives, results in such people neglecting values and denying the connection between the branches and trunk of the tree and its roots.

To prevent that dangerous phenomenon, it is incumbent on all the best of the nation to show true reliance on, rather than pay lip-service to, the fundamental role of the values of Islam and the revolution, in all planning. Obviously, any nation needs the construction movement in its country to secure its prosperity and honor. The difficulty of those nations which fail to rescue their country from the depths of poverty, dependence, discrimination and political and ethical corruption through constructive endeavor, is that they seek construction by forgetting proper principles of value, ethics, and religion and, in pursuit of the mirage of construction, plunge themselves into foreigners' traps or the mire of financial, political, and ethical corruption. The result is that, in the name of the country's superficial progress, they lose their humanity, honor, and independence and, more often than not, they fail to build the material foundations of their own country and, at one go, sacrifice this world and the hereafter, and substance and meaning, to their negligence. The Islamic Republic [of Iran] believes that it has reconstructed the country and saved Iran from the underdevelopments during the tyrannical rule of the Shah. Any strides made today toward scientific, industrial, and economic progress, and any activity in the arena of the country's reconstruction is a testament to the legitimacy of the holy ruling system of the Islamic Republic and the correctness of that claim. But any action directed at economic development and prosperity of the country will succeed only when it is inspired by Islamic ideology and principles, and is aimed at strengthening the aspirations, values and slogans of the Islamic revolution. Only in that case will the construction movement be a true and guaranteed movement and will the country not fall into the abyss of dependence and financial, political, and ethical corruption by imagining that it is going through reconstruction.

The deputies of the fifth Majles must take note that in legislating bills aimed at the country's development they must seek national progress and honor only through the brilliant values of Islam and the revolution. Anyone who shows indifference toward these revolutionary values in the name of progress will fall victim to blunders and illusions in his claims of progress; and anyone who humiliates the brilliant slogans of the revolution in the name of practicality is like the man who saws the branch that he is sitting on.

The deviant Western liberalism of today, in which the European and American peoples are drowning and which has annihilated morality, wisdom, humane relationships, the family, links between the younger generation with their parents, spirituality and religious beliefs, is making unacceptable demands on the Islamic system and its senior officials.

The duty of the Majles is, in the first instance, to stand against these demands and to insist on the clear and straight path of Islam and the Islamic revolution. This is the most important expectation that the great and brave nation of Iran and myself have of the elected deputies of the people.

2. The Islamic Consultative Assembly is the manifestation of national unity and harmony between all associations, ethnic groups and holders of preferences and ideas. The Majles is being formed by the real representatives of the great Iranian nation. Representatives of all cities, representatives of the close and distant provinces, representatives of the various Iranian ethnic groups, the representatives of the holders of political ideas and preferences, representatives of the religious minorities, and the representatives of Muslims must work hand in hand to execute the legal duties of the Majles.

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The Majles is one of the most glorious manifestations of unity among the Iranian nation. Here everyone is striving hard for the progress of a proud, victorious, noble and Islamic Iran and everyone is seeking only one goal.

The honorable deputies must appreciate the value of this unity and must exert all their efforts towards the strengthening and extending of this unity. All speeches, remarks and legislation must be directed toward the creation of greater cooperation among the nation. In fact the manners, the conversations and the behavior of the deputies must heal the wounds that might have been possibly inflicted during the elections in some of the constituencies.

Every action and speech in the Majles that might create divisions and differences or that might lead to public anxiety is against the essence and aim of the Islamic Consultative Assembly.

In its previous terms, the Majles was the place for the encounter of the political factions and preferences of the country and it will be the same in its present term.

In some previous terms, the political conduct of some deputies failed to prevent the Majles tribune from carrying out its important duty of cooperating with and healing the nation; and they failed in turning the Majles into an instrument for making tension or wars of nerves. Indeed, this has been a source of pride and respect for every term of the Majles.

Exchanges of views and debates among the deputies on issues that are brought to the Majles are not only useful and constructive but necessary. Initiatives and innovations in discussion of bills are a source of progress. But all this must take place in a healthy and serene environment free of tension and unethical acts.

The Majles tribune must not become an instrument for distribution of poisoned words, for the destruction of the rays of hope in people's hearts or for spreading pessimism among the nation against the government, the Majles itself or other officials in charge of the various organizations of the country. The various political factions must maintain their different points of views on the various issues but should also concentrate on helping with the country's process under the honorable banner of Islamic laws.

Unhealthy coalitions or statements that could be interpreted to mean that there are divisions among the senior levels of the system are not befitting to a Majles that must be the manifestation of national unity.

All the main centers of decisionmaking, politics and policy making in the Islamic Republic must act around a single axis and toward the single aim of building a developed, powerful, and proud Islamic Iran. And thank God that none of the officials of the system of the Islamic Republic have deviated from this great task.

Parliaments of the Western countries, because of their political ethics, are not eligible to serve as a model for our Majles; and, moreover, in the light of political composition, a great state like Iran, which is blessed with lofty ethical and political values, does not need to follow or imitate the political example of other states.

Leftist and rightist interpretations or insistence on forming political parties in the legislative Majles and other such issues, are worthless gifts [from the West]. It is beneath the Islamic Majles's dignity to accept such things blindly.

3. The Majles, in accordance with its essence, enjoys a close and important relationship with the government. Proper adjustment of this relationship is one of the most significant tasks of the honorable Majles deputies.

The first task of the Majles is to pass laws, which will oblige and enable the government to administer properly the affairs of the state. And the Majles should also supervise the implementation of these laws through legal channels. This task requires cooperation and harmony between the Majles and the government, and can be fulfilled through the Majles's support for the government. The health of this relationship should be preserved in such a manner as to convince the government to view the Majles as the body which unravels complicated matters.

The Islamic Majles should always perform its duties very carefully and very prudently, both under the existing situation — when the government is serving the nation under the chairmanship of one of the outstanding friends of the late Imam [Khomeyni] and one of the illustrious personalities of the revolution [President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani] — and also under the next government, when the burden of responsibility for running the state will, with divine succor and guidance, be shouldered by another prominent and elected personality, so as to enable the government and the Majles to resolve the people's problems and to move the country forward.

It is, however, obvious that the Majles deputies are not expected to avoid exercising their legal authority regarding questioning and impeachment when necessary. They are not expected to show negligence in their investigation of shortcomings either. The honorable deputies must always preserve the right to be blunt, independent, and truthful. They must particularly be careful not to neglect the divine trust of representing the nation, which

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could happen if they were to submit to temptation or allow themselves to be lured by some evil persons, who perchance may have infiltrated the sacred ranks of the country's executive managers.

4. My advice to the respected deputies is that they should establish and strengthen their relations with the masses, especially with the deprived strata in society. This will familiarize them with people's genuine needs and will also identify the priorities and demonstrate the importance of dispensing public funds correctly and eliminating unnecessary expenditure. It will provide the respected deputies with the necessary information they need to guide and direct government officials and discharge their own duties. I also advise the esteemed deputies to place importance on the time they spend in the Majles and the Majles committees; they should not waste even a minute of this time and should not be absent without good reason. They should take advantage of specialized information in the different committees and departments and be very careful and precise when they are examining and investigating bills presented to the Majles. They should make sure that they take part in voting on the basis of what is in the best interests of the country and within the framework of the sacred tenets of Islam, and they should think things over before disseminating their views from the floor of the the Majles.

I also advise all deputy brothers and sisters to observe piety, direct their attentions to worship and spirituality; disregard the vanities of this world; be humble about positions and ranks and consider that what is great and important is to serve the people, endeavor to uphold justice and crush injustice, and refrain from arrogance, negligence, extravagance, and deviation [enheraf; a term which is being increasingly used to refer to liberalism within the context of Iranian politics].

I remind them all of this great Koranic verse: [Arabic verse from Chapter 38, verse 83 of the Koran:] That is the last abode; we appoint it for those who desire not exorbitance in the earth, nor corruption. The ultimate issue is to the God-fearing.

May God's peace and benedictions be upon you.

Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, 11.3.1375 [1 June 1996]

Iran: Majles Member Says MPs Have Right To Choose Speaker

LD0806132096 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 5 Jun 96 p 1, 13

[Unattributed report: "MPs have the right to choose Majles speaker"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran Majles member 'Abdollah Nuri was matter-of-fact following the Majles open session on Sunday, saying he had "no particular views about the election of Mr 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri as provisional Majles speaker. MPs currently have the right to choose."

Speaking to reporters Nuri stated: "Nateq-Nuri has fetched around half the total votes of the representatives."

The Majles has 270 representatives, 133 of whom on Sunday voted Nateq-Nuri in as Speaker.

"Even if the election results of some constituencies had not been declared null and void, Nateq-Nuri would have still have fetched 133 votes, which is virtually a majority," Nuri said.

"The candidates from constituencies whose votes have been cancelled are mainly from the G-6, [but] Even if they were in the Majles right now, Nateq-Nuri would still have been elected as the provisional Speaker," he made it clear.

Twenty-seven elected candidates were not able to occupy Majles seats, as the Guardians Council had not confirmed the soundness of elections in certain constituencies.

'Abdollah Nuri, who was interior minister in President Rafsanjani's former Cabinet, said: "Approval of the credentials has its own particular trend and cannot take place based on the views of a specific group."

"I do not foresee any problem for the approval of the credentials in the Majles, since all the groups that I know are bent on avoiding sensitivity in this regard," he stated.

"Majles tasks cannot be carried out without the collaboration of different groups. All groups should cooperate with one another to carry out the legislative duties," he pointed out.

"Differences of views might exist in some instances, but we believe that in such cases sound competition should prevail, devoid of accusations and hues and cries." Nuri concluded.

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Iran: Ayatollah Amini Delivers Qom Sermons

LD0806193996 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1341 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. [passage omitted] The public purse is not free for one to use it as one wishes. Past events are a warning to those who can reach the public purse and they are also a warning to those who are related to such persons.

To the person who can put his hands on the public purse, it gives a warning that one does not have the right to give preference over others to one's children, one's relatives, one's brother, or to give them what rightfully belongs to others; or to secure their livelihood first and then, if there is enough, give to others.

Let's see to my child first, see to our child's home first, its carpets first, and then see to the poor seminarian who is living on a meager allowance and has all doors closed against him. To say: This child of mine is my honor and since I am a source of emulation I have the right at least to secure my own livelihood and the livelihood of my relatives; that is not Islamic logic.

Suppose there is a child of a minister or a child of a governor-general, or a person who somehow has access to the public purse: we say to the parents: Honorable gentleman, honorable minister, it is true that you have the public purse in your hand and you are able to help yourself and your relatives or children; and anyhow, there are various legal loopholes and some way can be found to do that; but do not do that. It is the public purse and one should not discriminate. Honorable gentleman: Think; look and see that now that your offspring has acquired wealth, has set up a farm, has set up installations, has started a business, has capital — ask where the capital has come from and ask to find out how much of your prestige has been used, how much of your power, how much of the public facilities have been used to accumulate that fortune and set up all that empire [tashkilat]. Do not think, with ease of mind: My child is, thank God, very clever and fortunate and has been able to achieve all that. Yes, that may be right and we have no quarrel with that. If your child is clever and through a legitimate business, legitimate capital engages in trade and accumulates a fortune, there is no problem; but, on condition that he does not use his father's power, his father's name. Otherwise it is not right.

And now my warning, my remarks, are addressed to the esteemed relatives of the authorities. Esteemed relatives' dear gentlemen: Your father has gained a position but that position is an Islamic one; he has reached the position of a source of emulation, the position of a minister in the government of the Islamic Republic, the position of a governor-general. You are not free; you must preserve your father's good name; his good name is the same as the good name of Islam. You must have the generosity of spirit to have a life like that of your father or even one at a lower level, so that it resembles the life of the [ordinary] people in order that you can make people optimistic about Islam, about the [ruling] Islamic system, rather than running this way and that after wealth by any means and saying that thank God, I am clever and I did it myself. Now, if you were not so-and-so's son, could you have done it? I wouldn't know!

It is a very difficult thing to do — a very heavy responsibility on the shoulders of officials of the public purse and the rulers, as well as their children and relatives. [passage omitted]

To end, let me tell you that when I say something here it does not mean that I wish to refer to all the officials of the public purse and their relatives as being like that. No; there are many of them who observe Islamic piety and virtue totally, whether in relation to spending the imam's share of religious tax and khoms [religious tax] or the spending of the public purse and use of public facilities, as those are part of the public purse also. [passage omitted] I said that so that, if there is someone within the ruling Islamic system, he should know what Islam says and so that the people should know what Islam says. If someone does not observe that then the fault is not Islam's. [passage omitted]

Iran: Five-Year Plan Faced With 5 Crises

96LA0222B Tehran PAYAM-E DANESHJU in Persian 5 Mar 96 p 7

[FBIS Translated Text] Economic Affairs Service—In the nation's First Five-Year Economic Development Plan (1368-1372 [21 March 1989 - 20 March 1994]), under the inspiration of the monetary school, economic policies were established whose implementation produced increased production and employment for the nation, but along with that we came up against five major difficulties.

In a speech at the Plan and Budget Organization titled "The Role of the Policy of Stabilization in the Production Cycle," Dr. Hoseyn 'Azimi, in explaining the above, said: At the end of the First Five-Year Development Plan, the nation faced five big problems: "a clash with the international system and a foreign policy crisis;" "foreign debt under crisis conditions;" "significant inflationary pressure;" "significant intensification of the imbalance in the distribution of incomes and wealth;" and "social and cultural crises."

He added: With regard to the first crisis we must say that my assumption is that for numerous reasons

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the international system's clash with Iran was and is serious. Of course it must be noted that basically the clashes nations have with each other are not because of some special enmity. Rather, these clashes come about because of strategic economic and political problems. Therefore, as the largest and most powerful nation in the region in terms of potential short-term capacity, we must consider this in our planning, or we will have problems.

With regard to foreign debt it must also be said that a specific figure for this debt actually remains unspecified, at least for the researchers. In any case however, one cannot expect the nation's foreign debt to decrease sharply within the next few years. Inflationary pressures continue and it is expected that this year's inflation will be about 60 percent.

With respect to income distribution, he said: There is not a lot of information with regard to this. With my own calculations I have come to the conclusion that the income distribution situation in society is now very bad and that the major part of incomes and society's wealth are in the hands of a limited few. For this reason, meaning the concentration of incomes in among a small part of society, if the former policies continue, it is predicted that in a short time the price of the dollar will reach 5,000 tumans and the nation's economy will be pulverized.

Continuing, 'Azimi said: The most recent reports from the National Nutrition Institute say that in the year 1372 [21 March 1993 - 20 March 1994], one in every four Iranians suffers from malnutrition in terms of quantity, one suffers from malnutrition in terms of quality, one overeats and one has the desired nutrition model. That means that 75 percent of the nation's population has food problems.

Continuing, he said: The effects of the aforementioned crises have been apparent in the country since last year, first in the foreign debt repayment crisis, then in the severe inflation and in the sharp increase in the foreign exchange rate, then it reached a peak in the first two months of this year [21 March - 21 May]. If the crisis is not stopped, inflation will increase sharply and the economy will collapse. According to Dr. 'Azimi, the implementation of the policies of stabilization will prevent a serious crisis for the nation.

He said that the policies of stabilization, whose implementation in the country began in the second half of 1373 [23 September 1994 - 20 March 1995], include pricing of goods essential for livelihood, stabilization of the foreign exchange rate, controlling foreign commerce and controlling currency in circulation.

'Azimi noted that implementation of the policies of stabilization is merely a good start. He said: For the success of the aforementioned policies, a group of other policies must also be adopted, in order to make structural changes in the country.

Iran: Who Is Responsible for Economic Deals?

96LA0222A Tehran PAYAM-E DANESHJU in Persian 5 Mar 96 p 12

[Article by Engineer Mohammad Reza Mohammadkhani: "Finance!! Who Is Really Responsible for Overseeing What These Gentlemen in Charge Are Doing?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A great many of them went into operation in 1373 [21 March 1994 - 20 March 1995] and 1374 [21 March 1995 - 20 March 1996], and some will also go into operation in 1375 [21 March 1996 - 20 March 1997]. They were purchased at 722 marks for each line (which totals hundreds of millions of dollars), yet early in 1373 the same systems were offered for sale by the seller company at $80.80 (less than 115 marks by the selling companies. In other words, systems were purchased and did not go into operation, and their prices were reduced before operation to 45 percent of the prior price (in other words, they became more than 55 percent less expensive), and this volume includes 2.5 to 3 million lines.

Consequently, in one premature purchase, more than 450 million marks in added expenditures was imposed on the country (just in the switch department). If we also add the finance charges, we will get a number that is vastly higher. In other words, purchases like this cannot be justified either economically or technically, because current communications systems change day by day and go through astonishing progress and transformation.

A full description of these instances cannot be given in one or two articles. God willing, if it is what God wants and if there is enough life left, in the future reports will given to our dear readers on this in several consecutive articles.

The gentlemen in charge of the Ministry of Post, Telegraph, and Telephone and the Telephone Company are so interested in finance (!!) that despite their not having any approved or specific share in credits of this type in the Islamic Republic of Iran's Second Five-Year Economic, Social, and Cultural Development Plan for the Telephone Company, they go abroad and sign a finance agreement with foreign companies and banks and make promises and agreements about the use of finance (!!) credits for the Second Five-Year Plan, and who knows what else they did.

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One such agreement was signed on 9 March 1995 between the Ministry of Post, Telegraph and Telephone, the **Siemens** Company and the B.H.F. Bank[1] of Germany. Iran signed an agreement for one billion marks, and agrees that out of these finance (!!) credits the German **Siemens** company will procure the equipment and implements needed for the Second Five-Year Development Plan.

Notice that before the participation in the competitive bidding takes place and the winner is announced and other legal stages given in the Public Accounting Law for government transactions are carried out, **Siemens** is so confident of being the winner that it announces the name of the financier (the one giving the credits), signs the agreement, makes the arrangements and sets the limits on its sale, and other things.

With regard to this, several months ago one of the respected Islamic Consultative Majles deputies asked a question of the respected minister of post, telegraph and telephone. The minister's answer was not acceptable to the deputy and the question was referred to the Article 90 Commission for further investigation.

Who is really responsible for what these gentlemen do? Is there really no one to ask how it is that the signer of a finance agreement is someone without any kind of academic or specialist background, without any higher education, who was formerly the telephone operator for the respected former minister of post, telegraph and telephone and who also served for a time as the telephone operator and office manager for this ministry's current minister, and who goes abroad and enters into negotiations with a foreign company like **Siemens** and a foreign bank, signing an agreement for the use of one billion marks in credits? Is there really no one in this country who is more knowledgeable, more committed, more specialized and more aware of economic, technical and management work, and of contracts and administrative affairs? Must he be in charge of this sensitive and key position in an important technical and economic organization? This organization's affiliated companies use extremely sensitive technical, specialist and security systems in establishing the nation's important ties, and most of its systems are dependent on foreign companies from dozens of different countries.

Footnotes 1. Berliner Handels - und Frankfurter Bank

Iran: Tehran Professor Speaks in London on Iranian Clergy

LD0606132796 London KEYHAN in Persian 6 Jun 96 p 11

[Unattributed report: "Abdolkarim Sorush: Religion Is Affair of Mystics, not Traders"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehran University Professor Abdolkarim Sorush, Hezbollah's number one enemy, on 30 May addressed a large audience at the Imperial College of London.

Within the context of his speech, Sorush said that the clergy relies on religion as a money-making source, whereas intellectuals seek another source, that is, science.

According to Sorush, the religious intellectuals criticize the clergy for exploiting religion to make money, for religion is the affair of mystical lovers of God and not businessmen.

He differentiated the clergy from the ulema [religious scholars] and said: The ulema are necessary for society.

Sorush said: At the present, the most difficult task in Iran is to talk about religion.

Iran: Director of Bafq Iron Ore Company Arrested for Embezzlement

LD0706151896 Tehran SOBH in Persian 26 May 96 p 3

[Unattributed report: "Managing Director of the Bafq Iron Ore Company Has Been Arrested"]

[FBIS Translated Text] According to local sources, the managing director of the Central Iron Ore Company of Iran (Bafq) and chairman of the board of directors, who is in charge of the preparation and production of raw materials for the company, which is affiliated to the Ministry of Mines and Metals, has been arrested. He is accused of embezzlement.

According to the HENGAM weekly publication, he is accused of sending foreign currency out of the country illegally and receiving money when signing contracts for the sale of iron ore to foreign companies.

It is said that 3 million tonnes of iron ore are exported from the Choghart mine in Bafq annually.

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Iran: ASR-E MA Criticizes Selective Approach of Press Board

LD0706171396 Tehran ASR-E MA in Persian 29 May 96 pp 1, 3

[Unattributed editorial: "One Decision and Several Questions: A Note on the Press Supervisory Board's New Decisions"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Press Supervisory Board announced last week that it had cancelled the licence of PAYAM-E DANESHJU [weekly: 'Student's Message'], and had sent written notices to SALAM, MOBIN ['Truth'; monthly with occasional contributions by Professor 'Abdolkarim Sorush] and KIAN ['The Great'; periodical which has carried articles by Sorush]. This announcement has added to the ambiguities surrounding some of the current press policies instead of clarifying them.

There is no doubt that the press should function in a healthy environment within the framework of relevant laws. This, more than anything else, is in the best interests of the press itself. But a healthy environment that generates confidence and is worthy of praise will only come about if it is not interfered with or influenced by factional viewpoints. Unfortunately, the method with which the press has been confronted in recent months is far from satisfactory in this respect. The decisions that have been taken recently also beg many new questions and have evidently created serious concerns for Muslim and revolutionary forces. Some of the questions that not addressed clearly and openly are:

1. Why has the Press Supervisory Board been selective in its approach to press offenses? Why has it not noticed some obvious violations on the part of those publications that it approves of? Instead, the board concentrated all its attention, very blatantly, on a number of specific publications. The tone and writing style of one or two evening papers, which have in recent months actively embarked on confronting the rivals of the majority tendency, cannot leave any doubts in the minds of any impartial and fair-minded individual that these papers were quite openly ignoring the boundaries of virtue, justice, and the law. So how is it that the Press Supervisory Board chooses to overlook these cases? And how is it that it maintains silence even over cases that clearly infringe the limits of ethical standards and decency and, in a rush to settle factional scores, undermine people's personalities.

Does not infringing personal and family issues and publicizing great and small political and personal accusations — similar to those we have seen in these kinds of publications in recent months — violate the sanctities of religious belief, religious duties, and the law? If so, how is it that the Press Supervisory Board ignores these and views press offenses solely from the majority faction's standpoint and political tendency?

This issue acquires more serious dimensions when we see that none of the publications referred to by the supervisory board has been informed about the details of their offenses yet.

2. Regarding the legal procedure in dealing with the accusations or legal offenses, the officials in charge and those involved in the affairs of the country's press have not yet come up with a clear policy that does not smack of being influenced by certain specific political tendencies. It is now 18 months since the newspaper JAHAN-E ESLAM ['World of Islam'] was closed down without the courts clarifying the outcome of the case yet. The weekly BAHAR ['Spring'] has been banned on the order of the supervisory board for over two months now, whereas its case has not yet been brought before the courts. The meaning of these shortcomings and the reluctance to clarify the legal position of these kinds of publications remain largely incomprehensible.

3. Regarding the publication PAYAM-E DANESHJU, in spite of its policy which is worthy of criticism, there are many questions to do with the social, political, and ethical spheres of life that need to be answered. In the space of less than three months, that weekly [PAYAM-E DANESHJU] was permitted to publish on the eve of the fifth Majles elections [8 March 1996], was acquitted by the courts, and then had its licence withdrawn again by the the supervisory board.

Despite the fact that there was every opportunity to investigate the infringements and assess the case in a court, in the presence of a jury, this was not done and the matter was not dealt with through the legal channels. It therefore prompts the questions as to why this weekly was allowed to resume publication and why was it again banned? We should note that one of our most important Islamic and revolutionary concerns should indeed be to apply the law and justice, even to those who have committed offenses, and not to neglect the natural rights of the accusers and offenders alike.

4. Without doubt one of the most important achievements of the Islamic Republic's system is the growth and development of the country's publishing environment and access to valuable press freedoms, for the preservation of which the relevant regulations and organizations have already been envisaged. The heavy responsibility and duty of preserving and elevating this environment rests with the officials and those in charge of press affairs. Naturally, the Press Supervisory Board and those in charge of implementation this board's policies,

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should, in the first instance, protect these legal sanctities and avoid expressing faction-oriented views that could weaken the legal basis of the Press Supervisory Board.

We hope that what we witnessed last week is not a prelude to a fresh move on the part of the majority faction to confront its rival publications.

Iran: BAHMAN'S WEEKLY Ends Publication

96LA0239J London KEYHAN in Persian 2 May 96 p 11

[FBIS Translated Text] BAHMAN'S WEEKLY, which started publication a few weeks prior to the first round of the Fifth Majles elections, announced its closure after publishing 17 issues. This weekly was published under the management of 'Ata'ollah Mohajerani, the parliamentary deputy of the president and one of the most active members of the "Khedmatgozaran-e Sazandegi group." Regarding the closing of BAHMAN, there are two stories. The first is that this weekly was published in connection with the elections, and after the elections ended, there was no reason for publishing it. The other story is that the closure of BAHMAN was on the verbal instruction of 'Ali Khamene'i, the leader of the Islamic Republic.

Iran: New Weekly Publication for Women

96LA0239K London KEYHAN in Persian 9 May 96 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] The first issue of BANU magazine was published this week in London. The first issue of BANU, which was distributed free of charge, was published in 52 pages with color cover and back cover. The chief editor of this journal writes in its editorial: "In the man's world abroad, having a journal only for women is a necessity."

We congratulate the officials, especially its chief editor, 'Ahmad Shekarnia, for the publication of BANU.

Nepal & Bhutan

Nepal: RPP 'Factionalism' Seen 'More Intense' as Statements Issued

BK1006031296 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 8 Jun 96

[Report by THE KATHMANDU POST reporter — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KATHMANDU, June 7 - Factionalism within the Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) appeared more intense on Friday [7 June] as leaders in the party's top rung issued statements and counter-statements for and against the government .

On the eve of the party's central committee meeting scheduled for Saturday, 21 CWC [Congress Working Committee] members today criticized their own colleagues who pledged support to the government on Wednesday.

"It is against our party's constitution to issue statements in support of the government at a time when the CWC is about to convene," said a statement issued by them on Friday. The statement is signed by 21 members, of whom some members said their signatures were "forged."

CWC members Ram Chandra Raya, Renu Yadav, Thakur Singh Tharu, Ram Lochan Mahato and Mahendra Raya who were mentioned as signatories to the statement said they did not sign any statement. "The signatures which they mentioned as ours was forged ones," they claimed. "It is done with the motive to assassinate our character."

Those issuing the statement include Jog Mehar Shrestha, Padma Sundar Lawati, Narendra Khanal, Thering Tenjing Lama, Krishna Prasad Rai, Narayan Dutta Bhatta, Hem Bahadur Malla, Bishnu Maden, Nara Bahadur Budhathoki, Dipak Bohara, Chanda Shah, Ganesh Sherchan, Nara Bahadur Hirachan, Kamal Thapa, Ram Krishna Acharya, Lal Bahadur Khadayat, Ram Narayan Singh, Mahendra Raya, Thakur Singh Tharu, Renu Yadav, Ram Lochan Mahato and Ram Chandra Raya.

Twenty-two RPP central members, mostly dubbed as loyal to party president Surya Bahadur Thapa, issued a statement on Wednesday, saying that to go against the present coalition government would not be in the interest of the country as well as the people.

RPP vice president Jog Mehar Shrestha however argued that it was "irrelevant" and against the party's constitution on the part of RPP members to "urge support to the government" on the eve of the CWC meet. Justifying Friday's statement against the government- supporter members, he said a counter-statement against them was essential. "It is up to the majority of the central committee to decide whether to support the government or not," Shrestha said.

RPP co-chairman Rajeswar Devkota also issued a statement on Friday, in which he urged the party workers to be alert against any attempts to divide the party. "We must shun groupism and be alert to safeguard our stand on nationalism, democracy and liberalism," he said.

Going by the trend of statements, RPP's CWC meet on Saturday is expected to revolve mainly round the question of supporting or withdrawing from the government.

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Main opposition CPN-UML [Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist] has been threatening for the past few months that it would "topple" the Deuba government during the coming session of the parliament. A party with only 87 seats in the 20 member House of Representatives, UML is however unlikely to topple the government unless supported by members from other parties.

The opposition's bid to topple the government by instigating a faction within RPP in March had failed after RPP leaders, including president Thapa, came united in support of the government.

Nepal: RPP Meeting Ends With No Talk of Pullout From Coalition

BK1006035596 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 9 Jun 96

[Report by THE KATHMANDU POST reporter — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KATHMANDU, June 8 - Contrary to speculations on a widening rift between party factions, RPP's [Rastriya Prajatantra Party] Central Committee meeting ended today without even discussing a possible pull-out from the ruling coalition.

The recent spree of statements, both in favour of and against the coalition, from the party's central committee members have sparked a new round of controversies.

The party is sharply divided in two factions, one vowing its allegiance to party president Surya Bahadur Thapa, while the other to party leader Lokendra Bahadur Chand.

The possibility of the party continuing with the present power-sharing arrangement had received a considerable boost yesterday itself when fourteen cabinet members from the party, pledged their support for the coalition. The signatories to the statement included known Chand loyalists as Padma Sunder Lawoti, Kamal Thapa and Ram Krishna Acharya.

In March the Deuba government had a close shave, when Chand loyalists backed off from their earlier stance, voting against the UML-sponsored no confidence motion in parliament.

Today's eight hour-long session of the party's apex body discussed the party's forthcoming central council meet and the prevailing political situation in the country, said RPP spokesman Narayan Dutta Bhatta.

The meeting also decided to ask the coalition government to seriously work towards controlling inflation and checking corruption.

But the issue of changing the present political equation was not even mentioned in the meeting, a central committee member told THE KATHMANDU POST.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Islamabad Reports India's Reply to Bhutto's Offer of Talks

BK0906155496 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Responding to Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's offer for talks, the Indian prime minister has suggested that talks be held at the foreign secretary level on issues of mutual interest of the two countries. In response to the message of congratulations of his Pakistani counterpart, Indian Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda has endorsed Benazir Bhutto's views on the need for establishing peaceful and constructive relations between the two countries. The Indian prime minister has said that his government is prepared to work with Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's government to resolve all issues of mutual concern. He said India is ready for a detailed and comprehensive dialogue with Pakistan. He made a suggestion for resuming foreign secretary-level talks.

It may be recalled that in her message to her Indian counterpart, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto had stressed that as civilized nations, the two countries should hold talks to restore normal ties.

Pakistan: Opposition Leader Views Trade With India

BK0806114896 Peshawar THE FRONTIER POST in English 8 Jun 96 p 12

[Report by PPI Correspondent in Lahore]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The member (PML-N) committee on budget Tariq Bandyhas taken strong exception to the utterances of federal commerce minister regarding trade with India and feared that it would cripple Pakistan economy.

Talking to this agency here Friday he said the new Indian government has unveiled its anti-Muslim policy soon after assuming the charge on which every Pakistani is showing his concern.

He said since Indian security forces were killing innocent Kashmiris such statements tends to injure the sentiments of all Pakistanis.

He warned that if the government started trade with India it would leader to closure of our industrial units here in Pakistan.

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He said the entire business community in Pakistan was expressing apprehensions that local industry would be ruined if Pak-India trade was allowed.

He said the government should pay heed to their apprehensions and provide complete protection on to their businesses before taking such a vital decision.

He castigated federal government for bringing harsh budget and advised not to accept pressure of IMF and World Bank and give mild budget to the people so that they may not feel any burden.

He cautioned the government against levying of new taxes in the upcoming budget and said if it did so, people would come out on roads and agitate against the government.

Pakistan: Mukhtar—Trade With India To Help Resolve Issues

BK0906114196 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 9 Jun 96 p 1

[Article by Shakil Shaikh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Federal Minister for Commerce Chaudhry Ahmed Mukhtar said on Saturday that trade with India under the World Trade organisation's arrangements will help resolve regional issues including the Kashmir problem.

The minister was talking to newsmen after his speech at the "pre-budget seminar" organised by the Forum of Economic Writers (FEW) in collaboration with Friedrich-Ebert-Stin-ftung (FES) at a local hotel in Islamabad.

To questions about the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status to India, the minister said, "The government has agreed in principle to give India the MFN status as we cannot escape it."

However, he made it clear that a decision in this regard will be made after the completion of studies being carried out on the various aspects of trade with India. He said a final report based on these studies will be ready for approval by the end of July.

He said India is part of the international market and Pakistan must recognise it as an international trade partner and nothing more as is being wrongly propagated. "The issue has been discussed by the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet but the final decision has to be made by the Federal Cabinet," he said. "Both the ruling and the opposition parties share similar views on this subject, and I find no need to bring up the matter in the parliament."

"Pakistani exporters will hit the market of more than 930 million people and our industry is quite capable of doing good business in India," he said, adding that a number of Pakistani businessmen have already established trade links with their Indian counterparts.

He hoped India would soon remove tariff and non-tariff restrictions to facilitate trade between the two South Asian countries. He said the European Union has already taken up the quota restrictions with New Delhi, asking it to remove them.

On the question of opposition for Indo-Pakistan trade by Pakistan's high commissioner to India and concerns expressed by security agencies, Mukhtar said Pakistan has an international obligation to open up trade with India by offering it the MFN status as in the case of other 123 members. "India has already given this status to Pakistan and there is nothing wrong in reciprocating it and holding bilateral trade talks with India."

Mukhtar said the idea of trade with India was floated during President Zia's regime. "Nawaz Sharif administration signed preferential treatment arrangements with India."

Pakistan: Kashmiri Leader Survives Assassination Attempt

BK0806090196 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In occupied Kashmir, a leader of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, Mr. Abdul Ghani Lone, survived an assassination attempt when a powerful car bomb exploded outside his house in Srinagar last night. Reports say the midnight blast extensively damaged the house situated at Rawalpura in the neighborhood of Srinagar. At least five people were injured and 20 shops and business establishments were also gutted in the devastating fire that followed the explosion. Mr. Abdul Ghani Lone escaped unhurt, while five people in the house received minor injuries. Hours earlier, unidentified gunmen opened fire at the house of another Hurriyat Conference leader, Mr. Ali Sahah Gilani, but no one was hurt in the attack.

Pakistan: Bhutto Reiterates Commitment to Defense, Budget

BK1006042096 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has reiterated her government's commitment not to compromise on defense of the country at any cost and said there would be an increase of 16 billion rupees in next defense budget. She was presiding over the

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PDF [Pakistan Democratic Front] parliamentary party meeting in Islamabad yesterday. The prime minister discarded the allegation regarding the purchase deal of Mirage-2005 aircraft from France and said these aircraft were being inducted into Pakistan Air Force in accordance with its requirements.

She also said that the government would meet the target of reducing the budget deficit to 4 percent next year. She said the next year's federal budget would be presented on Thursday [13 June]. Mrs. Benazir Bhutto criticized the opposition leader, Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, for demanding the formation of an anticorruption commission and said there are three courts — the lower, the higher, and the Supreme Court — for tackling cases of corruption. She said the demand, in fact, shows disbelief of Mr. Nawaz Sharif in the judiciary. She accused the opposition leader of plundering money in the cooperatives during tenure of his government.

Pakistan: Mirage Deal Allegedly Contradicted

BK0906115896 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 9 Jun 96 p 1

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rawalpindi, June 8 — While referring to a news item appeared in an English daily of Islamabad on June 3, regarding the purchase of used Mirage aircraft, the spokesman of Ministry of Defence has termed the report as speculative and conjecturous, says a handout. Insinuation based on such speculations are unfortunate, he added.

Pakistan: 'Procurement Procedure' of Mirage Deal Detailed

BK0606141696 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 6 Jun 96 pp 1, 11

[Article by Aroosa Alam]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD June 5: The vague clarification by the PAF [Pakistan Air Force] through news agency regarding the limited influence of the Chief of Air Staff in waiving certain conditions regulating the purchase of equipment by the PAF has raised more suspicions than providing answers to any about the controversial Mirage deal.

According to a clarification attributed to the Air Headquarters it has been claimed that contrary to THE MUSLIM's story dated June 3, the procurement is under the purview of the Defense Ministry which does not fall under the control of the Chief of Air Staff.

Since the Air Headquarters has passed the buck to the Ministry of Defense and has not itself addressed the pertinent questions raised by THE MUSLIM regarding the credibility of the shady deal, THE MUSLIM is articulating the procurement procedure followed by the PAF for the benefit of its readers as a part of its professional obligations towards them.

In the first stage of any fresh Procurement the Plans Division of PAF along with the officials of relevant technical directorates carry out technical evaluations to assess the sustainability of systems under consideration for purchase. At the next stage the companies manufacturing these systems propose their equipment systems and extensive intrusion takes place between the technical teams of the PAF and company/companies concerned. During these technical interactions companies to come as close as possible to the services requirement and specifications. This is perhaps the most critical stage where officials could shoot down an unwanted company and tilt the technical report in favor of company/companies with whom they wish to enter into advanced negotiations.

Simultaneously along with the technical evaluations budgetary proposals are asked by the Directorate of Planning of PAF from the negotiating firms. The first people to hear about the price are none other than the PAF bosses. It may be pointed out the budgetary proposals stage is an exclusive domain of the PAF.

Once the two stages of technical evaluations and financial proposals are completed, the PAF then approaches the government for allocations in case it does not have money in its own kitty. When funds are allocated by the government, the file of the technical evaluations along with budgetary estimates of various competitors is passed on to Ministry of Defense. At this stage if it is an outright purchase then the case is handled by DGDP [Directorate General Defense Procurement] branch and if transfer of technology is involved then it is handled by DGMP (Director General Munitions Production).

It may also be pointed out that in most cases the chiefs of the three services are empowered to declare any major purchase as proper on any single source basis. This means no competitor is to be allowed in any deal. It may be mentioned that the refurbishment upgrade work was awarded to M/s SAGEM in the Mirage Deal on the propriety basis which means that effectively there was not much left to be negotiated by the Ministry of Defense except minor hagging over financial terms and conditions regarding the schedule of payments to the company.

It is clear that the PAF has a central and important role in making evaluations and influencing the price structure before the case is actually handed over to the Ministry of Defense.

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It is pertinent to note the case of procurement is handled by the defense procurement at the middle and lower levels by serving air force officials who had gone to defense procurement on deputation. The Ministry of Defense role is there but it is not a predominant one in any case. Except for the Secretary Defense Production Division, who is a civilian all the top officials such as additional secretaries, the majority of joint secretaries, the DGDP, the DGMP and their supporting staff comprises serving officers drawn from the three forces who naturally look towards their bosses in the services for a better future and not towards civilian heads. This could be the one reason why the DGDP ignored the orders of Secretary Defense Production to stop the down payment till the final scrutiny is done by relevant quarters. Had the deal been as simple as claimed by the PAF through its clarification through PPI orders of the Chief Executive would have been followed.

Pakistan: Defense Minister Evaluating French, Ukrainian Arms

BK0706154996 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 7 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The defense minister, Mr. Aftab Shaban Mirani, has said a committee headed by the chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee is currently evaluating defense requirements of the country.

In an interview in Karachi today, he said the defense committee of the cabinet has already approved the requirements of frigates for Pakistani Navy. He said talks are continuing with French companies about the possibility of procuring Mirage-2000 aircraft. About the Army, he said experts had conducted trials on tanks offered by some countries. However, the tanks offered by Ukraine have been found suitable. The deal with Ukraine has been made, which also includes supply of spares. The defense minister said the prototype of main battle tank being built by Pakistan in collaboration with China is expected to be ready in 1997-98.

Pakistan: Foreign Minister on Ties With Central Asia, Afghanistan

BK0606132696 Islamabad THE NATION in English 5 Jun 96 pp 1, 9

[Report by Fahd Husain and Altaf Hussain]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] ISLAMABAD — Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali says there is scope for increased trade with the Central Asian Republics and he plans to give a proposal to the cabinet in this regard.

In a panel interview at THE NATION-NAWA-I-WAQT office, the Foreign Minister discussed at length Pakistan's relations with Central Asia and the prospects of further strengthening these ties. He also spoke of his particular interest in this region which spurred him to become the first Pakistani Minister to lead a delegation to Central Asia during the tenure of the previous government.

A lot has happened since Sardar Asif's maiden voyage to the hinter lands of Central Asia. The initial euphoria which emerged after the emergence of these states as independent entities has died down to a great extent. The pan-Islamic resurgence which was dreamed of by many officials and analysts has sobered down as the Central Asian Muslims struggle to stand on their own feet. Islam has proved to be a relatively docile issue, overshadowed by the need for economic development and financial assistance through investment. The markets of Central Asia have welcomed Pakistani goods just like they have welcomed Turkish or Iranian or Russian or European commodities. Trade and commerce have no religion and the Muslims of Central Asia have proved this.

"Critical appreciation (of these states) was necessary in order to avoid any mistakes," said the Foreign Minister. He said some people in Pakistan had other notions about this region and their first reaction was they have found long lost cousins. "I advised them we should not overstep our limits."

He said he advised charter flights coming to Karachi from Central Asia and this led to economic tourism which has resulted in half a billion dollars in trade in the last five years or so. In addition, Pakistani products have filtered into Central Asia as have Pakistani entrepreneurs.

But Pakistani could have done more and Sardar Asif admits this. He said was due to a number of reasons. The slow pace of Pakistani bureaucracy was one. The lack of proper infrastructure and institutions in the Central Asian States was another. But he agreed that countries like Turkey and Iran had an advantage over Pakistan when it came to trade and investment in Central Asia because of their larger economies. "Turkey has a bigger economy and Iran has oil reserves," he said. "Both have surplus to invest whereas we don't". Sardar Asif argued that given a choice Pakistan would industrialise itself rather than do the same in Central Asia. Pakistan being a net importer of capital, it was not in a position to help set up industry in Central Asia, he stated.

He argued that Pakistan had the added disadvantage of not having a direct land route for access to Central Asia. Four years ago it was thought that the trouble in Afghanistan would die down, but the optimists had

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underestimated the capacity of the Afghans to prolong the conflict. The result is that till today, this direct route remains blocked for Pakistan. Turkey and Iran, on the other hand, have been actively promoting trade relations. The latest in these efforts is the opening of the rail link between Iran and Central Asia, inaugurated last month. The Foreign Minister stated that Turkey was a natural ally of these states because of cultural and linguistic relations. In addition, since Turkey is a member of the NATO and might gain membership in the EU, these states see Turkey as providing them access to Europe, said the Minister. But, he said, it was a misconception that Turkey and Iran had made remarkable inroads into Central Asia. He argued that because of poor infrastructural facilities and other handicaps, all countries were finding it difficult to establish economic relations with the Central Asian states and pump in funds and initiate projects. "If we have strong economic ties with these states, they will look to us for guidance and support," Sardar Asif said. He added that two of these states were ready to support Pakistan anywhere on any issue.

Pakistan has signed numerous agreements with Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgystan, Tajikistan.

The Foreign Minister also spoke about the prevailing situation in Afghanistan and defended Pakistan's policy by saying that it did not favour any single group. He said Pakistan had welcomed the alliance between Golboddin Hekmatyar and Borhanoddin Rabbani and this was proof of the fact that Pakistan wanted all groups to cooperate with each other to find a peaceful solution. The Minister again refuted allegations that Pakistan was supporting the Taleban. He said the present situation in Afghanistan did not reflect badly on Pakistan's policy, rather it was the fault of the Afghans themselves. He said Pakistan was suffering because of bad policies of the past where certain factions were favoured at the expense of others. "We are paying for those follies," he said, adding that now Pakistan had reversed this policy and was strictly neutral.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Pakistani Minister Seeks Colombo's Mediation on Kashmir

BK0806093696 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0500 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga has said she would take up the Kashmir issue with Indian leadership for the resolution of the long-standing dispute. This she said when the foreign minister, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, called on her in Colombo yesterday.

The foreign minister later told newsmen that he had asked Sri Lankan president to help bring both India and Pakistan on the negotiating table to resolve the Kashmir dispute. He was perfectly satisfied with the response given by the Sri Lankan leader. Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali said Pakistan was willing to negotiate under the Simla accord, which provides for the bilateral resolution of the Kashmir issue, provided India agreed to a multilateral approach under the United Nations resolutions. He said during his meeting with the Sri Lankan president, they also discussed matters of bilateral interest and regional issues.

Sri Lanka: Pakistani Minister Holds Talks With Kumaratunga on Kashmir

BK0806115296 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The visiting Pakistani foreign minister has asked Sri Lanka to mediate in his country's bitter row with India over the Kashmir issue. Foreign Minister Asif Ahmad Ali said yesterday that he had asked President Chandrika Kumaratunga to help bring both New Delhi and Islamabad to the negotiating table and resolve the crisis over the disputed Kashmir.

Ali told reporters shortly after talks with the Sri Lankan president, they felt that Sri Lanka with its strong relationship with both the countries could play a very constructive role. He said that Pakistan was willing to negotiate under the Simla Agreement which provides for the bilateral resolution of the Kashmir issue, provided Indian agreed to a multilateral approach under United Nations resolution.

According to AFP, Ali pointed out that the intervention of Sri Lanka, a neutral party during the two wars between India and Pakistan over the disputed territory, was very high on the agenda during talks with Mrs. Kumaratunga. The president, according to Mr. Ali, had said that she would take it up with the Indian leadership and that he was perfectly satisfied with the response he has got from her. He added that Islamabad was going to open talks with the Indian Government. Before meeting the Sri Lankan leader, India's high commissioner, Nareshwar Dayal, paid a courtesy call on the Pakistan's minister at his hotel in Colombo. Ali said that they spoke of regional issues. The minister further told journalists that Islamabad was willing to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty if New Delhi agreed to this pact either through a bilateral agreement or as part of a signatory to the multilateral pact.

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Sri Lanka: Pakistan's Ali Rejects Indian Press Charge of Helping LTTE

BK0906144596 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Visiting Pakistani Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali has dismissed allegations made in the Indian press that Pakistan was helping the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam]. When asked to comment about such allegations, he said there nothing (?had been) more absurd than that. He said that the LTTE has [words indistinct] airlines for helping Sri Lanka. Mr. Ali, who arrived on Thursday, was scheduled to depart yesterday. He delayed his departure till today on a special request of Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar.

Asked whether he was satisfied with the volume of trade between Sri Lanka and Pakistan, he observed that the figure did not reflect the excellent relations between the two countries as right now the two-way trade is around $100 million. He said that there was the capacity to increase it manifold. Mr. Ali said (?there were) hurdles that existed to increased trade and economic cooperation.

Sri Lanka: United Front Government Rejects LTTE's Appeal for Help

BK0806120096 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The new Indian Government has rejected an appeal for help from LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] terrorists saying it would only extend help to the legitimate government in Colombo. External Affairs Minister I.K. Gujral told newsmen in Delhi yesterday that India's new United Front coalition government was committed to noninterference in the internal affairs of all neighbors. Gujral made the comments when asked to comment on the reported plea for Indian help from the LTTE. The minister further said that his government's efforts would be to build India's friendly relations with Colombo. The LTTE, which recently lost control in the Northern Province, has been publicly seeking support from New Delhi saying the island's Tamils were India's sincere friends.

Sri Lanka: President To Remove Officials 'Averse' to Government Policies

BK1006034896 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 9 Jun 96

[Unattributed report - received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Chandrika Kumaratunga on Saturday threatened to remove public officials who are averse to Government policies and fail to implement them. "The time has come to remove such officials," the President told a gathering of public sector officers in Colombo, and in a hard-hitting speech, asked corporation heads not to hesitate in taking such action.

President Kumaratunga was addressing the first annual general meeting of the Association of State Corporations and Statutory Bodies held at the Presidential Secretariat.

She told the gathered heads of corporations, boards and other statutory bodies, that in no way need they fear to remove officials who show reluctance and block the implementation of the Government policies.

"Implementing government policies is not participation in a political act. The policies of a political party elected by the people become the official policy of the Government. If any officer shows reluctance to carry out such policies it amounts to an act of sabotage. Removal of such officers will not be, in any way, an unjustifiable act," she argued.

President Kumaratunga said that she has received complaints pointing out instances where some Corporation Heads, who had accepted their appointment with the commitment to implement Government policies, had ignored the political leadership, including Members of Parliament, and also the trade unions in their respective Corporations.

"This is incorrect. The Corporations Heads should hold regular discussions with the trade unions and listen to their views," she said.

"Some officials mark time until a change of governments. I am in possession of reports on such officials," she warned.

The present Government did not remove any officer who had worked under the previous regime. Some officials are trying to exploit that democratic decision of the Government to their advantage. Some Corporations Heads who got their appointments from this Government are protecting officials who are involved in acts of sabotage, the President claimed.

"Salary increase is no solution to the rising cost of living.

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Productivity and profits in the state sector have to be raised. The growing profits can be utilised to create new employment," she said.

"There are some political parties in the opposition using these saboteurs to realise their political goals," she added.

She also said that since the present government came into power corruption has been controlled to a greater extent but noted that corruption was still found in some places.

"We have been able to stop threats to human life. If no threats are posed by the administration, then it becomes possible to stop threats coming from other quarters. The solution to all ills we have faced is to establish democracy in its full form and force," she said.

Justice and Constitutional Affairs Minister and Finance Deputy Minister G.L.Peiris delivered a special lecture at this meeting.

Sri Lanka: Foreign Minister Dismisses Tea Poisoning Claim

BK0906143496 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar has dismissed a claim by the Ellalan Force that Sri Lankan tea exports had been poisoned as a threat that could not be taken seriously. The minister said in a statement that the so-called Ellalan Force is known for making similar [word indistinct] over the years. The statement pointed out that all Sri Lankan tea processed for export was meticulously tested to ensure that it conforms to the highest standards. Tea industry officials are confident that the export consignments could not have been tampered with. The minister also pointed out that it was not known for sure whether the Ellalan Force was even a front organization of the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam]. He said that he suspected the claim to be work of ordinary mischief makers.

Mr. Kadirgamar appealed to all consumers of Sri Lankan tea to remain calm. He assured them that the government had taken every possible security precaution. The minister was responding to a Reuters news report which said that the Ellalan Force claim had been sent to diplomatic missions in Colombo. The Plantation Industries Ministry has also issued a statement dismissing the claim. It said that the Sri Lanka Tea Board carried out vigorous quality control test at every stage of production. The ministry observed that similar claims made in 1980's and last year had proved to be completely fake and baseless.

Sri Lanka: New Outbreak of Fighting Leaves 7 Soldiers Dead

BK0806125396 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 8 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Fresh fighting between security forces and the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] terrorists erupts in the North and East. LTTE terrorists fought a brief but fierce gun battle at Misalai in the Jaffna peninsula leaving seven soldiers and two terrorists dead. The operational headquarters say that two soldiers in the patrol escaped with injuries and military reinforcements recovered the bodies of two Tigers and a rocket- propelled grenade launcher. At least another terrorist was killed during a cordon and search operation in Jaffna on Thursday [6 June]. LTTE terrorists attempted to infiltrate the forward defense of the security forces at Tandikkulum, north of (Chendikulam) in the Vavuniya District yesterday. Troops repulsed the terrorist attempts forcing them to flee the area with casualties. Two soldiers died in action. There were no immediate reports of terrorist casualties. There had been an escalation of Tiger attacks outside the Jaffna peninsula following the liberation of the area by the Army. Meanwhile, at Puttur in eastern Walikamam division three children were injured due to the explosion of an old water bomb left behind by the terrorists whilst they were meddling with it. One child succumbed to his injuries and the two injured children were evacuated to the Jaffna Hospital on Thursday.

Sri Lanka: Tamil Tigers Kill 17 Troopers in Attack

BK0906084796 Hong Kong AFP in English 0613 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Colombo, June 9 (AFP) — Tamil Tiger guerrillas ambushed an army patrol in eastern Sri Lanka on Sunday killing at least 17 soldiers, defence sources said.

Gunmen from the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) attacked the soldiers at Jayanthiyaya while they were on a routine patrol, the sources said adding that rebel casualties were not immediately known.

The attack took place in the same area where nine police constables were killed by the Tigers in a similar ambush two days ago, officials said.

There had been an escalation of Tiger attacks in the eastern regions following the loss of the rebels' northern citadel of Jaffna to security forces earlier last month.

The Tigers are leading a protracted campaign for independence in the island's northern and eastern regions where the two million Tamil minority is concentrated. More than 50,000 people have died in bitter fighting since 1972.

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